MOST REMARKABLE STORY NEXT WEEK ENTITLED "WHEN I WAS DEAD."

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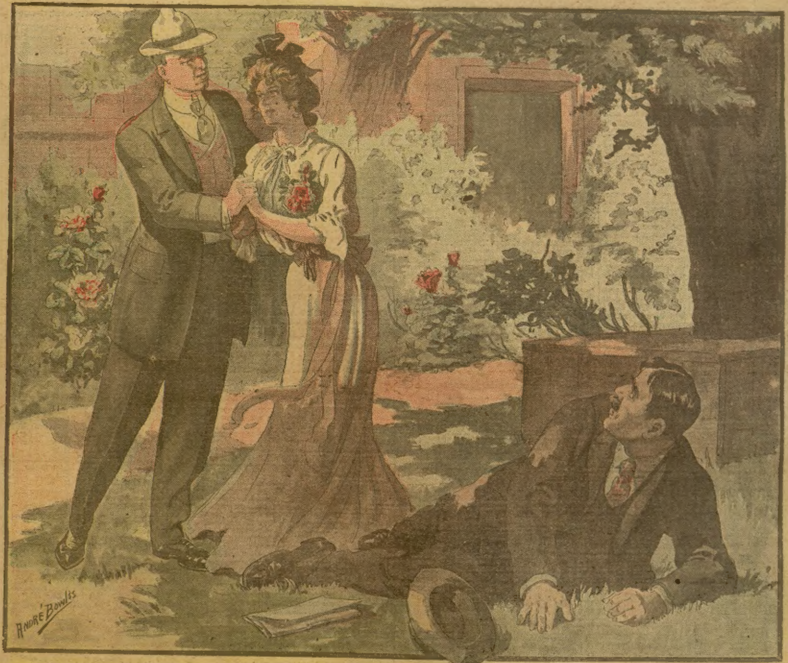

THE WHITE SLAVE

By Eleanor Fairfax

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CHAPTER V.

A BLIGHTING INFLUENCE.

"Say, Rosy, who's your Sheeney feller?"

"Oh, Rosy, McGannis asked me what you meant by having a feller running after you all the time, so watch out," and two fellow clerks watched Rosy's face as she crimsoned, then turning from them, looked direct into the crafty eyes of a man who had been hounding her to distraction, a collector for the Berstein Furnishing Company.

For three days Rosy had dragged through her duties, wondering how it was possible for a human being to endure as she had. Sunday had passed without a word from Ned, so had Monday and Tuesday, and Tuesday night, driven desperate, she had gone with Mrs. Gordon to the Kennedy home, to be met by Mr. Kennedy, a quiet man wrapped in his books. When asked about Ned, he said gravely:

"I'm sorry to say my son is sick, very sick, and Mrs. Kennedy has taken him for a trip."

Rosy had pulled her mother away at that, her head held high, her blue eyes flashing.

"He's not sick, mother, it's just an excuse," and when she climbed out of bed Wednesday morning, her pillow was still wet with her tears. To add to this, Monday morning a collector arrived with the full amount of the doctored bill, fifty-one dollars, demanding payment. At noon she had hurried over to the big salesroom, to be told that Mr. Berstein had been unexpectedly called to New York.

The collector looked at the girl's harassed face, and asked with a disagreeable accent if she was ready to pay.

"Oh, please stay away a little," she whispered. "I am going to pay it all, but it was bought on time, and Mr. Berstein said I might keep on paying just as I had. If you keep on coming to me, I'll lose my job and then where'll you be?"

"Now, see here," the collector said brutally, looking the girl straight in the eyes, "don't hand me out any dope like that, or I'll show you just what we can do. We can clap you in jail for getting things under false pretenses, see? Fifty-one dollars! You, when you don't get more than six a week at most."

"Mr. Berstein knew," she faltered.

"The less you say about him, the better. That old duck's running for his money. Don't you know that he's a dead one with us? The detecs are running him some, for he buttoned onto some of our ready, and we won't stand for nothin' like that," and the collector, fresh from instructions from Sol Berstein, grinned impudently.

"I'll give you just two days to pay it. If you don't then, to jail you go," the collector said in a very low voice and then disappeared.

"A good customer of yours, Miss Gordon?" asked the floorwalker.

"No, sir," gasped Rosy.

"Better stop his hanging around, then," the floorwalker said sternly, thinking to himself, though, as he walked away.

"The girl's in debt, I know. It's a shame! The fellow's a collector, if I ever saw one," and then he forgot, for collectors visited his own home, and his heart was heavy with troubles belonging to himself.

"I say, Rosy, is he from Berstein's?" asked one of the girls sympathetically, and Rosy nodded, while the others shook their heads, and a girl, older than the others, said in a low voice:

"I pity you then, Rosy. You'd better be dead than get them folks after you."

Rosy felt her head whirling. There was a mist before her eyes, when, out of what seemed the far distance, came a voice, low, deep and thrilling with a something which seemed to soothe her tortured nerves:

"Will you kindly show me some gloves?"

CHAPTER VI.

A HALF OPENED ROSE.

Turning, Rosy looked into a pair of black eyes, soft, tender, filled with open admiration. She saw a man's face, as nearly perfect as could be found in all the city, and realized that her customer was one of the men whose names are mentioned at the Charity Ball, and other functions, where Chicago's four hundred air themselves and show off their clothes. His breeding struck her immediately, and her own hands seemed coarse and red beside his white ones, upon one of which a great seal ring appeared.

"What kind?" she heard herself asking.

"Gray ones, sevens," he replied in that thrilling voice, which suggested moonlight shimmering on the water, sweet, heart-breaking music and the perfume of drooping roses dying from sheer heaviness of beauty. That peculiar quality in the young man's voice had earned him thousands of dollars, and he had it under perfect control and used it with telling effect.

In spite of her bewilderment, Rosy deftly drew out the gloves, for she was a good saleswoman. She had been given her particularly good place because of her beauty, which attracted patrons, but she also knew how to make sales, and for this reason more latitude had been given her with respect to the collector than would have been to one whose sales were less.

The young man seemed a little particular, looked at a number of shades, but was finally suited, and then seemed for the first time to notice how pale the girl was.

"I beg your pardon," he said courteously, "but you appear ill. I hope I have not contributed to any headache by my being so hard to suit?"

"No, no," Rosy replied eagerly. "My work never hurts me, it's just worry," and a sudden wave of sorrow rushed over her, superinduced, perhaps, by the tender sympathy in the man's dark eyes. Never before had she felt more helpless, less able to struggle.

"Worry for one so young, and excuse me, so beautiful?" the man asked gently, as she took up the parcel just returned, and counted the change into his white palm.

"Yes, I'm about crazy," Rosy panted, hoping she would not break down and cry before this handsome man.

The handsome man was watching keenly, and measuring her feelings as accurately as though with a rule, he looked about him, then leaning forward lowered his voice and said almost in a whisper:

"You poor, little girl! You are just like a sister I had who is dead. I wish you'd tell me your troubles and see if I can't help you, just as she would have done."

"Oh, I can't," and Rosy drew back.

"Show me some gloves. Tans glace, this time," the young man said hastily, and Rosy drew out the box, controlling herself with a mighty effort.

"Yes, you can. I'm a stranger here, all alone. My mother died a week ago. Tell me what's the matter, and I'll let you know my troubles, too."

Rosy still shook her head, but this time not so decidedly. The floorwalker was watching Rosy, but saw she was making another sale, so did not interfere.

"When do you go out?"

"In half an hour."

"How do you go home?"

"Street car."

"Let me ride home with you?"

"Why, yes," and Rosy's face brightened.

"Thanks, so much, I'll be waiting for you," the young man said, with such a friendly tone to his voice that Rosy felt her heart grow a little lighter, and as he left the counter with a tan pair of gloves added to his gray ones, she scarcely heard the teasing remarks of her companions upon her handsome and "swell" customer.

Gerald Fletcher according to instructions, had commenced his work on Wednesday, acting under the orders of Sol Berstein.

CHAPTER VII.

THE ENEMY AT WORK.

"And now that you know my past life like a book you have read many times over, won't you tell me your troubles?" and ignorant little Rosy Gordon thought she had never heard so tender and sympathetic a voice, and she was right. The handsome young man was reaping a fortune from that voice of his, and the various emotions he could make it express.

"I want to sympathize with you as you have with me," Gerald Fletcher said in a low tone, making himself heard in spite of the noise made by the car.

"I can't tell what's troubling me," Rosy replied, setting her teeth, and struggling with an overpowering desire to cry. His voice affected her so, she felt that in a minute more she would burst into tears.

"Poor little flower," he said gently. "A rose so lovely that the petals should be a happy, bright pink, and yet are so sadly white! A rose! Most beautiful of flowers, drooping on its stem!" These words were spoken as though into space, in a voice that trembled with intensity. Sometimes Gerald Fletcher did act as though he meant every word of what he said, and this was one of the times. He had gauged his victim, and had formed his plans accordingly. Very well he knew that this was not a case of hold up his finger and the girl would follow. The allowance of time given him was so short that it would require all his skill to "deliver the goods." For a child of sixteen, Rosy knew well how to behave, and had with this fascinating stranger a pretty manner of reserve that was becoming and attractive.

"Pardon me," he continued gently, "but is it a love trouble? Has any one dared to chase the color from your face and put such agony in your eyes? Let me know the name of the man and I'll bring him to his knees," and the dark eyes flashed.

Rosy trembled. She was a dear, good girl, but woefully at a disadvantage when pitted against such a master of his business as Gerald Fletcher.

Her face flushed a painful crimson, as she replied in a low voice:

"There isn't any one."

"Lie number one," Gerald thought. "She is in love but has had a quarrel, and is in splendid shape for me to work on her, though landing her is not going to be an easy job, and Berstein and Company will have to pay big for it," and he could have laughed aloud as the thought of Sol's face when he presented his bill. However, his face expressed the utmost deference, his voice was sweet and tender as he asked gently:

"What is it then?"

"Please don't ask me," Rosy returned sharply, and he respectfully bowed his head, and turned the conversation, giving her some more of his interesting past, manufactured for the occasion. Surely, according to his highly dramatic narrative, no other man had so many troubles or had passed through such heart-rending trials as he, and never before in all this highly colored life, had any one so soothed and rested his tired spirit as Rosy Gordon.

The man's conversation was so entertaining, his flattery so specious, that Rosy was herself soothed, and for the moment forgot her two troubles, the pressure of debt and the strange actions of Ned. How was she to know that Ned was even then rushing across the country toward San Francisco, lying on his back, heavily drugged, while his mother sitting opposite kept constant watch? Neither she nor her mother had estimated the character of Mrs. Kennedy. Feeling that her son's future was threatened, she had drugged him and borne him away, purposing to take him to the Orient. After a month on the Pacific, with the prospect of a delightful trip through Japan and China, she felt sure he would forget the beautiful girl whom she felt had entangled him. In making this estimate of Ned, she showed her total ignorance of his character.

The car sped on and on, and Gerald Fletcher whispered in Rosy's dainty ear, looking his admiration, which was really unfeigned. She was so lovely that no one could help admiring the child, with her Madonna face, shining golden hair and great, childish blue eyes.

A lady watched the two, with a feeling of uneasiness that grew stronger and stronger. For years a worker in the slums of great cities, Mrs. Faith Bryant knew well the types she saw before her, and was much tempted to interfere and yet she hesitated. Although she felt sure the handsome, well dressed young man, talking so earnestly to the girl, meant her no good, Fletcher's manner was so respectful that she knew that she had no grounds for her worry. However, she watched and the face of the sweet girl was imprinted upon her memory, and she was to know some of the deepest anguish that had ever come into her busy, beautiful life, over this same girl.

"Then you feel that I am too much of a stranger for you to confide in me?" Fletcher asked at last.

"Yes," Rosy murmured.

"If we get better acquainted, what then?"

"Oh, I don't know, how can I?" she said, again speaking sharply.

"May I ride home with you tomorrow night?"

Rosy hesitated. She had insisted upon paying her own car fare, and he had allowed it, not wanting to distress her, he explained, and so she felt under no obligations, and he did take her away from the horrible reality of life.

"Please let me, you do help me so much," he breathed into the pink ear.

"Well, if you want to," Rosy hesitated.

"Want to? Well I guess yes. I can hardly wait until tomorrow night," he replied, his eyes shining.

Rosy flushed again, and Mrs. Bryant, whose duty took her from the car just then, wished that she might stay. After she had left the car, she reproached herself for not continuing so as to discover where the beautiful girl lived and see if she had a mother.

She did not know that Rosy made Fletcher leave the car at the next corner.

"No, I go further, but I don't want you to come along any more," she said resolutely, and with a cadence of sadness in his fine voice, Fletcher said good-by, and lifting his hat with a gracefulness that was almost a poem, he stepped off and Rosy was left alone with her thoughts.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE COMBINATION OF FORCES.

"Now we've been awful good to you, ain't we?"

"You are driving me crazy."

"Aw, come now, how's that?"

"Why coming after me with a bill I was told I could have plenty of time to pay," and there was a sob in the voice.

"So you say," and the emphasis on the "say" was indescribable.

"Don't keep this up, I can't stand it."

"Now, see here," and the man's voice was violent, "let's get the whole thing threshed out. You've been buying at Berstein's for over a year."

"Yes."

"For over a year you've been wearing our goods and living on our credit, and we've had to pay for everything our own good money, and so you've been living on charity."

Rosy shrunk as though from a blow. That awful interest which had so upset her plans, had placed the transaction far beyond any thought of charity, but she did not know how to answer him. He had come to the house that night, and she had slipped out to the gate to have a talk with him. Within the lighted parlor she saw her brothers, quietly reading, and her mother's song floated out to her. They were so near and yet she was here, out in the dark with a man she feared as she had never feared any one before.

"Now you see we're doing business on a different basis than old Berstein. He was an easy one. You could dope him some, but you can't us. You owe money, and you've got to pay it or do time."

Rosy shuddered.

"Now, let me tell you, you'll pay every cent of that money, fifty-five do now——"

"Fifty-five!"

"Yes, sir, fifty-five. It costs for me to keep running after you. You'll pay that tomorrow, or we'll send an officer for you, and you'll go to jail and then to the pen and hard work for at least five years."

Rosy was used to debt. From her babyhood her mother owed every one and kept herself poor paying for "dead horses." It had seemed quite the proper thing to her to buy on credit, when answering an enticing advertisement she had found Berstein willing to trust her, but she had never known of anything like this before. Go to jail, to be shut up with criminals, and her good name spoiled forever! It was terrible, and her mind turned toward the only escape she knew of, suicide.

"Now I've told you," the man thundered, "you can just cough up that money tomorrow morning, or you'll be behind the bars by noon, see!" and he clenched his fist and shook it in her face. Startled, she shrunk back with a low cry when a miracle occurred. The threatening figure dropped at her feet, sent there apparently by a white fist, and the low, marvelous voice she had grown to know, said quickly:

"What is it? Who is this man? What is he threatening you for?"

"I cannot tell," Rosy cried, burying her face in her hands.

The brothers were still reading in the lighted parlor. The untuneful voice of Mrs. Gordon floated out, asking repeatedly:

"O where is my wandering boy tonight?" but caring nothing for the fate of her daughter who stood at the parting of the ways. She was facing a crisis in her young life, and there was no one to hold her back.

"I'll tell you all right," snorted the collector, rising and ruefully rubbing his jaw. "This girl owes our house a bill of fifty-five, which has been running a year, and she thinks we'll let her go. I've been telling her that she pays tomorrow morning or gets pinched," and Rosy could hear his ugly teeth grind as he gave his recovered hat, which had been knocked off, a shove, landing it over one ear, and folded his arms.

"You scoundrel!" Fletcher cried, then stepping up to the trembling girl. "Do you owe this man anything?" he asked her.

"Yes, yes, and I wish I were dead!" and she bowed her head on the gate, and sobbed until her whole body shook. Fletcher winked at the man, then said gently:

"Poor little girl! Don't cry," then to the collector:

"Have you the bill with you?"

"Sure I have. Been wearing out bills running after her," and he waved a piece of paper.

"Receipt it in full," commanded Fletcher, pulling out a big roll of bills, more money than Rosy had seen in her entire life, and counting off five tens and a five, and handing them to him.

"No, I can't let you," Rosy said faintly. The sky seemed very near, it bore her down and there was a great roaring in her ears.

"It is a pleasure, and you can pay me back if you want," Fletcher said gently, thrusting the bill into her almost lifeless fingers. "I am so glad I happened along here just now," then bending so she alone heard what he said, the man whispered:

"I kept thinking about you, Rosy, and could not keep away. I am growing fond of you little one. Now, come, can't you trust me? I want you to stay down and take dinner with me. I'll bring you right home. Or, I tell you, if you don't want to go to a restaurant, I have some friends who have asked me again and again to come to dinner and bring a lady friend. I'll telephone the lady and tell her I'll come tomorrow night. You'll come?"

The relief had come so suddenly, in the midst of blackest despair, and then for nearly two weeks she had grown accustomed to the company of Fletcher, who had accompanied her home almost every night, remaining away just enough to make her miss him, and she replied gently, gratefully:

"Indeed I will, thank you."

"Better tell your mother where you are going," he suggested. The man learned from Rosy that she and her mother had quarreled, and had not spoken since the night of her birthday, although she had given no details, with the exception of the night they had gone to the Kennedy home.

"No, I won't say anything," she said decidedly, and having accomplished all he desired, Fletcher spoke briskly:

"All right then, I'll rustle this brute to the cars and do it fine, too, so good-night and pleasant dreams," and he held out his white hand. Men in her rank of life never had such hands.

"They will be more pleasant than for many months," she returned so gratefully that the collector had to swallow twice before Fletcher raised his hat, and then taking him by the collar assisted him over the ground in a way to speak well for his prowess as an athlete.

As soon as they passed from Rosy's sight he relinquished his hold, and the collector, shaking himself, said in a surly voice:

"See here, Jerry, next time you knock me down don't hit me with a battering ram. You hurt some."

"My chivalry in rescuing the maiden!" Fletcher laughed sneeringly.

"I say, Jerry," the collector asked coldly, "don't you ever hate yourself for the part you play?"

"Why?"

"It's so low down. Mine's bad enough, and if it wasn't for the wife and babies I'd quit right now, but yours! God, man, I'd starve before I'd play your part."

Gerald Fletcher shrugged his shoulders as he lit a cigar and returned mockingly:

"But, my dear Ike, you aren't me, you know."

CHAPTER IX.

THE TWO SPIDERS.

Sol Berstein sat in his dirty little office, opening from the large salesroom, bending

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—You can buy it on your own terms at my lowest factory price, saving $25 to $50.

I guarantee it Forever and give you Free Insurance and Free Music Lessons

I AM President of the Hobart M. Cable Company—Capital, $350,000.00. I build the world-famous Burdett Organ that you have heard so much about. I sell the Burdett Organ *right to you* and charge you my *lowest factory price*.

That's my *new* way, and it gives you the Burdett Organ, the organ which for fifty years has been known everywhere as the best, and you *save* at least *half* on the price.

Now I am going to make you an offer that is so liberal you simply *can't afford* to refuse it:—

I will send you the genuine Burdett Organ (any one you select) and you can try it in your own home for ten days.

You don't have to pay me a penny in advance nor make any deposit of *any* kind.

I take *all* the chances, *all* the risk.

Now, if you want to keep the organ after you have tried it, I sell it to you at my *lowest wholesale factory price*.

If you don't like the Burdett Organ—if you don't think it's by far the best organ, or if you don't think the price is less than half you would have to pay for an organ not half so good—then I don't want you to keep it. So you just notify me and I will take it right off your hands.

And you are not out a *penny*, and you are under no obligations to me whatever.

But if you *do* keep the organ, I give you, without any extra charge, a perpetual guarantee.

You see I guarantee the Burdett Organ *forever*—with a legally binding pen and ink guarantee, secured for you by $350,000.00 capital of my company.

If at any time (no matter how many years after buying) you find that the Burdett Organ is not fully as represented, or that it has any defects in material or workmanship, I will either repair or replace your organ with a new one entirely at my expense or refund every penny you have paid.

That's all in the iron-clad guarantee, which legally binds me to live up to every word.

No other organ builder in the world *dares* to make such a guarantee, because no organ except the Burdett Organ will *stand* it.

And now to remove every possibility of objection which you might have to this plan, I even go further—With every Burdett Organ I give you absolutely Free Insurance.

This insurance is a part of my agreement with you, and is *absolutely binding upon self and my company:* (Capital $350,000.00.)

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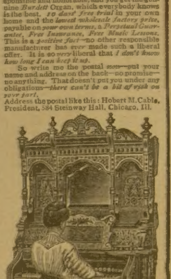
That puts any other way of buying an organ clear out of your consideration.

Because no other organ builder in the world does anything like that.

And in addition to all this I offer you a course of music lessons given by the best instructors in the country. As soon as I hear from you I will send you, absolutely free a copy of my handsome book, "The Story of the Burdett Organ" which gives you full particulars, pictures and full descriptions, and factory prices of Burdett Organs to select from, and a copy of my Unlimited Guarantee and Free Insurance offer. Remember, you are dealing with the *largest* manufacturers in our line, who are *fully* responsible and honorable, and you get the genuine *Burdett* Organ, which everybody knows is the best. *10 days' free trial* in your own home and the *lowest wholesale factory price*, payable on *your own terms*, a *Perpetual Guarantee*, *Free Insurance*, *Free Music Lessons*. This is a *positive fact*—no other responsible manufacturer has *ever* made such a liberal offer. It is so *very* liberal that *I don't know how long I can keep it up*.

So write me the postal *now*—put your name and address on the back—no promise—no anything. That doesn't put you under any obligations—*there can't be a bit of risk on your part*.

Address the postal like this: Hobart M. Cable, President, 584 Steinway Hall, Chicago, Ill.



over a book on his desk which resembled a dictionary. Now and again his thick lips parted, showing the black teeth, and a grin ran over his face. The man of business was satisfied. This was the only book he ever studied, and from it he gained all the pleasure his life knew. Not a drinking man, nor a dissipated one, he rejoiced over the success of his "business," and gloated over his money like the miser he was.

"Such a business," he laughed, "such a business, and increasing every day! Talk about fortunes made on the Board of Trade, in Wall street, smuggling opium, there's nothing like mine for clear gain, nothing! The goods here, bought at so low a price and sold so high that even if we only get ten per cent of what we charge we make a good profit. Then, once we get the girls in our grasp! Other people in our trade go at it so clumsily, but we know how, we do. No screaming, no leaving traces behind. The little dears go of their own free will," and he leaned back, the wicked expression deepening on his face.

An instant later he was bending over his book, while a young man stood before him. He was another Jerry, only not quite so good an employe for this particular line of business. Still, he was not sent out to lure girls like Rosy, but to those for whom he was specially fitted. His report was short and to the point, and with it he handed Sol a bill on which was set down each item of expense.

Sol checked them over, then pressed a button and the young man smiled.

"Could Jerry do better?" he asked. Jerry was his model.

"Nope, you've delivered, too, but then look at Jerry's work. Think of what he brings in. The job he's on now is one of the best we've ever had," and Sol smacked his lips.

"I saw her," the young man said concisely, "and honest, Sol, I couldn't have done it."

Sol Berstein opened his eyes, laughed in an ugly manner, then stamped "approved" on the young man's bill. "Go get your money," he sneered, "and come in tomorrow. Leave sentiment behind, however."

The young man looked at the man he hated so intensely, and wished with all his heart that he had the courage to rescue the beautiful girl he had seen behind the glove counter. Hardened as he was, there was something in her pathetic expression and childish beauty that appealed to the better part of his nature, and made him turn faint when he thought of her awful fate.

He longed to defy his employer, but his bread and butter depended upon his work, he had been at it so long that he understood nothing else, and except when his conscience troubled him, it was a very easy life and one that paid well. Luring innocent girls into the clutches of those engaged in the White Slave trade is not difficult work, although it kills every decent particle in a man's nature. A man who thus lives is the lowest of his sex, and in time becomes worthless, because such a life eventually leaves its trace on the face, and Sol Berstein and his partner could tell of wrecks, filling premature graves, who once had been successful as Jerry or Tom Knight, who was surprised at his own emotion. Once a man engaged in this unholy line of business shows his debased nature in his face, he is worthless to his employers, for the first step in the fiendish work is to inspire confidence.

As Tom Knight left Sol Berstein the latter nodded sagely, saying to himself, for, as his thoughts moved rather slowly he had a way of muttering them, but never out loud, he was too cautious for that:

"Tom will outlast Jerry. Jerry has no soul, he never did care," and then opened his book, made several new marks in it, and when he greeted Mrs. Carrol there was triumph in his eyes. She thought she could read the book as well as he, but she was over confident, for Sol had a way of making entries that told to him alone their meaning. It was necessary for him to keep such a book, in which he recorded all the information he could obtain of his intended victims, because his one fault as a business man was his poor memory.

Mrs. Carrol leaned over his shoulder, shedding a delicate perfume that filled the dirty little office.

"Tonight, then?" she asked, and her eyes sparkled.

"Tonight, and we may expect a whopping bill from Jerry."

"Pay what he asks, he's worth it," and she nodded her head emphatically.

"I've wondered if Jerry couldn't fill the place of the late Mr. Carrol, eh?" Sol said, with a rising inflection.

Mrs. Carrol flushed and her eyes showed her rage.

"Sometimes, Sol Berstein, you forget yourself," she said in a constrained, low tone that he knew was dangerous.

Until her dying day Mrs. Carrol would never forget the amused contempt with which Jerry had repulsed her when she showed some personal interest in him, nor his words:

"My dear Mrs. Carrol, I'm willing to play the villain for you if you pay me well, but never with you, I've not sunk that low."

"Cut it out, Carrol," Sol said, yawning. "No time this, when the business is doing so well, for us to fight."

"Well, you keep some control over your tongue," she warned, and he nodded, and then sitting side by side the two made more plans, weaving webs for girls whom fate had cursed with attractiveness. No matter how young or beautiful or innocent, they were not to be spared. These two did not confine themselves to girls who were in their debt. Their agents were all over, watching incoming trains, living in various parts of the city, where they could make rapid acquaintances with desirable prospective victims. Other industries might feel the effect of trades unions, theirs did not, and the demand for beautiful, innocent girls was world wide.

Like two great spiders they bent over the big book, making notes, forming plans, their faces contorted with evil thoughts, their eyes like coals of fire. Mrs. Carrol herself recognized the fact that the time was coming, when in spite of the work of experts upon her face, she would have to give up her position in society, but she never once thought of abandoning her business, it paid too well.

CHAPTER X.

THE DELIVERED GOODS.

A very different Rosy floated in behind the glove counter the morning following the payment of her debt, from the one who had left work. Dressed in her best, the dress not put on since her birthday party, she was dimpling and smiling, looking up shyly from under her long lashes as of old, causing the girls to wonder. Several asked her if she had found a gold mine, and one, more outspoken than the rest, said abruptly:

"What's on, Rosy? Why are you decked up so fine?"

Rosy only laughed, gave her head a delightful little toss, and dusted her stock industriously. The floorwalker felt relieved, for he had been worried about the child, and thought:

"I suppose it was some love affair, and the man's made up with her."

With her radiant face, Rosy attracted custom at such a rate that the buyer noticed and spoke to the assistant manager when he came past the department.

"Which girl?"

"Right there, the one with the golden hair."

"What's her name?"

"Rosy Gordon, nice girl, and sell! Gosh, she beats all the rest put together."

"Well, I'll speak to the old man about it. Perhaps we had better raise her pay a little."

"I think so, to keep her. Some one else will grab her up."

"Yes, well we'll do it," and the assistant manager rolled along, his hands held behind his portly body, his small eyes seeing everything, although barely open.

They never did raise Rosy's salary, however, for this was her last day with them, and it was a record breaker. People stood about patiently waiting a chance of getting her, while other girls stood idle. She could barely stop to take breath, and she was so happy that she wondered if she could be the same girl who had thought that death was the only way out of her misery. The black despair which had pressed down upon her so heavily had obscured Ned's seeming disloyalty. In fact, upon that wonderful day she scarcely thought of him. Strange to say, the other girls did not appear jealous. There was something about her gay, sweet manner that disarmed them, and they were never to forget her as she was then.

During the afternoon the manager himself walked by, noted the crowd waiting for her, and sauntered away, his hands also clasped behind his back, and made a note to call her to his office in the morning, a summons she was never to answer.

In after days, Rosy often asked herself if she had any premonition of what was in store for her, but never was sure. Yet she did not, for she was too busy to become introspective, and when the hot, hard day was at an end, she hurried on her hat and went out to meet Gerald Fletcher, her anticipations for a pleasant evening lighting up her face.

They met as usual near the place where she took her car, and, strolling to it, he helped her on.

"We will go out on it a short distance," he told her.

"All right," was her bright reply.

Then they talked of several things, and she finally asked:

"Is your friend willing to have us come?"

"Of course, delighted."

"It's so nice that you want to introduce me to your friends," she prattled on, yet Jerry's heart never beat a throb faster, his evil soul knew no compunction. To him her very artlessness was only pleasing in that it made her price higher, and his commission greater.

"Make up with your mother?" he asked, and his tone had a note of reproachfulness in it. Knowing the wilful nature of the girl, he had known he had only to suggest that she confide in her mother, to make her keep her staying downtown a secret, so he was not surprised, when she said in a cross tone:

"No, I didn't. Mother won't miss me. One of our friends, Lizzie, a grass widow, is engaged, and mother is so pleased she won't think of me," and there was a bitterness in her voice.

"Don't you believe in love and engagements?" came from Fletcher's lips although he was tired of her and wished his work was over.

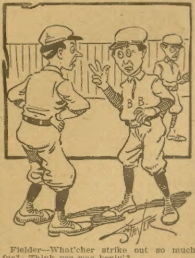
"Me? I don't know," she faltered. "I don't care for Lizzie's, though. She's marrying again, and some one younger than her."

"Marrying again? Then you don't believe in second marriages?" Jerry asked, hardly able to control his mirth.

"I don't think they are quite nice," Rosy returned with a blush, which did not leave her face, when Jerry signaled for the car to stop, and helping her from it, walked openly down the street by her side.

She was gloriously lovely, with that brilliant flush on her soft cheeks, still with the childish lustre of innocence upon them, Rosy, as she was never to be again. In the open daylight, with a whole city about her, with a policeman within call, and an honest one, who would have risked his life to save her if he had known, she walked calmly by Jerry's side to her doom. Carrying out the deception to the last, Jerry assisted her up the steps of a large, handsome house, drew her inside a vestibule, and pressing the bell, waited by her side until the door opened, and still ignorant, still innocent, pure in thought and deed, Rosy Gordon walked into a prison worse than the county jail, where she was to be robbed of her birthright, and made into a White Slave.

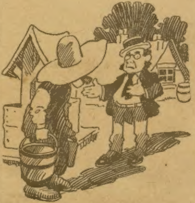
The continuation of this startling story will be found in the Ledger issue of next week. If you are not a regular subscriber to the Ledger we would like to have your name on our list. The Ledger is only $1.00 per year; it is worth many times that amount. Send in your subscription, for many great stories that you cannot afford to miss will appear during the coming months. With every subscription we send entirely free of cost one of our splendid King Cameras or any six of our splendid patterns. See pages thirteen and fifteen.



Fielder—What'cher strike out so much for? Think yer was boxin'?

Battman—Nope, but when I see the way you was strikin' out I t'ought you was in a swimmin' match!

Same Variety.



Mr. Farmboar.—Mr. Medders, the butter we had at breakfast wasn't like what you gave us last summer. What do you suppose is the matter with it?

Mr. Medders—Blamed if I know; it wus outen th' same dad-binged tub!

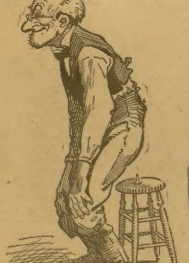
Improved the Chance.

At a recent wedding in a small western town the officiating clergyman, after the ceremony and the usual congratulations, turned to the assembled friends and said: "Friends, you all know these young people; you have seen them grow up from children, and now that they have entered the holy state of matrimony perhaps some of their old neighbors have some special word to say to them."

There was a silence; no one responded for a moment; then the father of the bride stepped out from his position near his daughter and said:

"I don't know as I can add anything to what has already been said," and he looked solemnly about the little gathering, evidently uncomfortable and embarrassed, but fortunately his eyes fell upon a neighbor, a political opponent, who would never listen to his views upon certain matters relating to taxation, and the speaker's face brightened, and he exclaimed with energy "but this seems an excellent opportunity and I should like to say a few words on the single tax!"

Sticking Up for Him.



PUTS THE "GINGER" IN

The Kind of Food Used by Athletes.

A former college athlete, one of the long distance runners, began to lose his power of endurance. His experience with a change in food is interesting.

"While I was in training on the track athletic team, my daily 'jogs' became a task, until after I was put on Grape-Nuts food for two meals a day. After using the food for two weeks I felt like a new man. My digestion was perfect, nerves steady and I was full of energy.

"I trained for the mile and the half mile runs (those events which require so much endurance) and then the long daily 'jogs,' which before had been such a task, were clipped off with ease. I won both events.

"The Grape-Nuts food put me in perfect condition and gave me my 'ginger.' Not only was my physical condition made perfect, and my weight increased, but my mind was made clear and vigorous so that I could get out my studies in about half the time formerly required. Now most all of the University men use Grape-Nuts for they have learned its value, but I think my testimony will not be amiss and may perhaps help some one to learn how the best results can be obtained."

There's a reason for the effect of Grape-Nuts food on the human body and brain. The certain elements in wheat and barley are selected with special reference to their power for rebuilding the brain and nerve centres. The product is then carefully and scientifically prepared so as to make it easy of digestion. The physical and mental results are so apparent after two or three week's use as to produce a profound impression. Read "The Road to Wellville," in pkgs. "There's a reason."

More Pity.

Wife (during the spat)—I only married you because I pitied you.

Husband—Well, everybody pities me now.

A Happy Bald-headed Man.

H. Dayton, a chemist living at A 3004 Magnolia Avenue, St. Louis, Mo., accidentally discovered a mixture that made his hair grow. He tried it on his bald-headed friends with the same results. He is so proud of it that he has had the receipt printed by the thousand and is sending it to all who write and enclose stamp.

Charity is a cloak that covers a lot of advertising.

FREE DEAFNESS CURE.

A remarkable offer made by one of the leading ear specialists in this country. Dr. Branaman offers to all applying at once two full months' medicine free to prove his ability to cure permanently Deafness, Head Noises and Catarrh in every stage. Address Dr. G. M. Branaman, 1283 Walnut St., Kansas City, Mo.

Map of the World 25 Cents.

A beautiful map, valuable for reference printed on heavy paper, 42x63 inches, mounted on rollers, edges bound in cloth, showing our new island possessions, the Trans-Siberian Railway, Pacific Ocean, cables, railway lines, and other features of Japan, China, Manchuria, Korea and the Far East. Sent on receipt of 25 cents in stamps by W. B. Kniskern, P. T. M., Chicago & North-Western Ry., Chicago, Ill.

Often a man imposes on himself when he taxes his memory.

MERIT WINS

Hayner Whiskies are achieving universal recognition for Quality and Purity.

In these days of Pure Food agitation when so many distillers are compelled to retire from the field or change the labels and character of their product, it is interesting to note that one firm The Hayner Distilling Company are continuing on the even tenor of their way undisturbed by any State or National laws that may be passed—due, solely to the fact that their products are and always have been of the highest standard of quality and purity—complying with all the requirements of the Pure Food Laws now just as they have been for the past 42 years before the Pure Food Laws were enacted.

The Hayner policy offering only the best and highest whiskey that can be produced is meeting with the success that it so richly deserves. This company now, on the completion of its 42d year, has over 750,000 staunch and loyal patrons in the United States alone—and the company's efforts are now directed to make their customers' list a round one million.

Since the foundation of this vast business in 1866, Hayner Whiskey has been sold only by mail and goods shipped direct from distillery to the consumer—in this way saving their patrons all the profits of the dealers and the middlemen and assuring them that the whiskey would reach them in all its original purity and without the possibility of any adulteration or dilution.

The constant increase in their business, has compelled the Hayner Distilling Company to greatly increase their facilities—and their Registered Distillery, No. 2, Tenth District, Troy, O., now covers three entire city blocks and is considered by experts to be one of the finest and best equipped distilleries in the United States. The capacity of the distillery is 2,000 bushels of grain per day—and the warehouses, where the whiskey is stored and aged, have a capacity of 5,000,000 gallons. The Hayner Distilling Company has a paid-up capital of $500,000.00 and they have always been recognized as one of the most reliable and responsible firms in this country.

Their announcement of Hayner Private Stock Bottled-in-Bond Whiskey on another page is worthy of the careful attention of our readers.

THE MOSS MILL MYSTERY;

Or, The Lady of the Stair.

By MAJOR ALBION F. GRANT.

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Begun in No. 36, Sept. 7. Subscriptions can begin with that issue, or back copies can be obtained from news stands, or our agents, or by mail from office of publication.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE MAN WHO CAME.

After my rather exciting interview with the rector of Moss Mill, I was more than ever anxious to go back to Papryus Court and test the value of the plan Gaston Bland had drawn for me.

Would I be able to find the hidden chamber by touching the button in the wall near the fire-place? And what would be my reward when I had found it?

But other things were to interfere, and I was to be thrown off the scent in a strange manner.

Half an hour after my talk with the minister, there came to Moss Mill a man who put up at the little hotel. This person was a man of sixty, and had the appearance of one who had roughed it a good deal in the world.

The page of the little register whereon he recorded his name gave me a slight start, for the name of Clement Marigold was plainly written there. Was he a relative of the dead woman? I looked at him as he lounged for a moment in the light of the reception room, and saw in him a secretive person who would give out no information, if he did not care to.

He inquired for Cleo Marigold, acquainting me with the fact that he had not heard of the crime of the Court, and Mrs. Smart told him all she knew.

The stranger listened without interrupting her, and for a while he remained silent.

"What became of the other one?" he finally asked.

"The other one?" echoed Mrs. Smart, with a glance at me. "I can't say that I exactly understand you?"

"Why, Dosia."

The little landlady shook her head.

"I never heard of Dosia."

"She did not come here, then?"

"I can't say."

Clement Marigold turned away and caught my eye.

"Perhaps you can tell me," said he, as he came forward. "If you have been a resident of Moss Mill for some time——"

"I have not been here long,' I replied. "In fact, my stay here may be short."

"Then you know nothing about Dosia?"

"I cannot enlighten you, sir."

The man drew back and looked away for a moment. Then he took from his pocket a bit of paper which he consulted for a few moments.

"Perhaps, then," he resumed, "you may be able to direct me to the residence of Phidias Glenn?"

"The rector——"

"What, has he become a preacher?" and I fancied that smile appeared on the lips of the strange man.

"He is the rector of Moss Mill."

"Yes? That is all I want to know now."

I told him where he would find Phidias Glenn, and he went away. I looked after him with a curiosity which I could not keep down. Why did he inquire about the minister? And why had he expressed surprise at finding him in clerical robes?

I waited till Clement Marigold had left the hotel, when I stole forth and caught sight of his angular figure as it made its way towards the home of the rector.

In another moment I was at his heels, keeping in the darker shadows of the trees. Marigold went straight to the porch that fronted the parsonage and rang the bell. The door opened and I saw him disappear.

In front of the rector's study stood a bush which offered concealment, and I darted across the space that intervened and crouched behind it.

For a moment I saw nothing, and then two figures entered the study and I recognized the two men—the rector and his strange visitor.

The face of the minister was white as ashes. I could see that his hands were clenched at his sides and his lips welded together. He led the other to the middle of the room and suddenly turned upon him. They stood face to face for a minute, and the newcomer dropped into the Morris chair and from its depths looked up at the man of God.

As I was beyond hearing, I left the bush and went to the window, dropping close to the ground below the sill.

For some time the two men gazed at each other, and then I heard the voice of Clement Marigold.

"You look a good deal like your old self," said he, at which the preacher seemed to start.

"Have you come here to tell me this? My glass shows me how I look.

"Of course. You are a little thinner than when I saw you last. It hasn't been worry, I trust?"

At this the minister took a short turn around the room, but not for an instant taking his eyes from his unexpected caller.

"Why have you come here? I am getting along well and I don't want to be molested."

"Bless your life, Hadrian, why should I disturb you?" cried the other. "I hardly expected to hear that you were in the pulpit, and I must confess that the discovery amuses me. You a man of God? Well, well, there are strange metamorphoses in this life. What is your salary here?"

Phidias Glenn seemed to bite his nether lip to the quick.

"What is that to you?" he broke forth. "It is everything to me. I am another man now."

"Of course. Like certain animals you have changed your skin."

"See here!" and the preacher's eyes emitted a baleful glare. "You must not goad me too far, even if I am a man of God. I can put off the holy garb for a time and——"

"And show me that you still carry the old claws beneath the velvet?"

"That's it exactly! Why have you come to Moss Mill—to the little Eden I enjoy here?"

At this moment Clement Marigold leaned back in his chair and, looking up at Phidias Glenn, broke out in song.

"I hear the roar of the stormy waves
O ho! O ho!
The sea will have some new made graves
While the wind doth blow;
But we are safe from the ocean's roar,
Pass the glass, we'll drink some more,
The sea will add unto our store
O ho! yo, O ho!"

During the singing Phidias Glenn stood erect and his face changed color twice. I listened to the song, into which the singer seemed to throw his whole soul with delicious abandon, and at last he stood up and went through the pantomime of drinking a toast.

"You have no soul!" suddenly cried the rector.

"I left it in the old retreat."

"It were better if you had remained with it."

"Eh? You don't seem delighted to see me?"

"I'd sooner see the devil!"

"Our old compatriot, eh?" and the speaker laughed. "Come, Hadrian, let us get down to business. I have just heard that Cleo Marigold is dead. What has become of the other one—Dosia?"

"You'll have to pursue your inquiries in another direction," was the reply.

"You don't know?"

"Was I ever her guardian?"

"You should know. She and Cleo were inseparable."

"But I don't know what has become of Dosia."

"Who killed Cleo, then?"

"You can perhaps elucidate the mystery that surrounds the case and do us all a favor."

Phidias Glenn turned away and I saw the gaze of Clement Marigold follow him like a hawk.

"How much did she leave?" he asked.

"The house called Papyrus Court and some little money?"

"Who gets it?"

"Gaston Bland, her nephew."

"That's the man accused of killing her?"

"The same man."

"Why did he do it?"

"You will have to ask him. You will find him in jail at Berryville."

"I won't ask him. I'll ask you instead."

"You'll do nothing of the kind."

I saw Phidias Glenn step hurriedly back, and the next moment he faced Clement Marigold with a cocked revolver in his hand. The minister's face was drawn and ashen. The deep-set eyes emitted a mad glitter that boded his visitor no good, and I regarded this startling tableau with bated breath, worked up to a pitch I cannot describe.

CHAPTER XIV.

MY TRAIL GROWS EXCITING.

The tragedy I confidently expected did not occur. Marigold simply rose to his feet, gave the rector of Moss Mill a dark look and went to the door.

The rector, still gripping the weapon, followed him with his gaze and permitted him to open the portal.

"Good-by, Hadrian," he said. "I can go away and become a preacher somewhere. I don't want to disturb your family. Your children——"

"I have none."

"Your wife, then——"

"I buried her five years ago."

"Aha! then you have neither chick nor child to call your own? Perhaps that is best. I am in the same box, Hadrian. So Cleo is dead—murdered, and you don't know what became of Dosia? Well, I hardly expected this state of affairs. But never mind; I will go. You wouldn't use that pistol on an old compatriot?"

"You must not goad me too far."

"A little of the old-time temper left. You should get rid of that and pay all your devoires to your religion. The old life——"

"Come! I said you must not goad me too far."

"Then I will not. Good-night, Hadrian."

I saw the tall figure of Clement Marigold step into the adjoining hallway and disappear. Phidias Glenn stood for a little while in his tracks with his eyes riveted upon the closed door, as if he would liked to have thrown himself forward and ended the career of his victim before he quitted the house.

The front door opened and Marigold came out upon the porch. He stood there for a time with the night wind on his face, and then stepped down. I could almost have touched him by putting out my hand, and I could hardly restrain myself from doing so.

He looked back at the lighted window of the rector's study and appeared to reflect for a moment, then he came toward me, and I hugged the ground with my heart in my throat.

I watched him as he went toward the hotel, and, as I turned back in the same direction, I glanced into the room once more. Phidias Glenn had not stirred from his last position. He stood rigidly in the middle of the room, and, glancing at his side, I saw that the hand still clutched the revolver.

But I wanted to know more of Clement Marigold, and so I noiselessly rose to my feet and glided after him.

He led me straight back to the hotel.

When he encountered Mrs. Smart, I heard him ask her, as he glanced at a watch, when the next train passed.

"Which way—north or south?"

"It matters not."

"You can go north in forty minutes," was the reply. "But you are quitting Moss Mill in a hurry."

"Oh, yes; I transacted my business sooner than I anticipated. There's nothing to keep me here. In forty minutes, eh?"

He turned toward the door and went out. This time he plodded down the street in direction of Papyrus Court, and I was again at his heels. He kept on as if he knew the trail, for he suddenly turned to the right and went down over the narrower way that would take him to the oaks, in front of the old pile.

Marigold paused in front of the house that loomed up between him and the stars, and, folding his arms, gazed at it in absolute silence. I regarded him, as he stood between me and the stars, wondering who he was and what was the mysterious link that bound him to the past which Phidias Glenn had buried.

Not a word fell from his lips. He remained in his strange attitude for several minutes, then he darted forward and sprang upon the long porch of the house and vanished.

His disappearance so wrought upon me that I could not follow him for a spell, and when I found my powers he was as invisible as the future.

Not a sound came from the precincts of Papyrus Court. The old house was as silent as if it were tenanted by the dead, and when I crept to the fringe of the porch and listened I heard not even the crickets that haunted the spot.

What had become of Marigold? Had he entered the place and did he know anything about the secret chamber? Was he even now robbing me of the secret of the crime, and must I let him baffle me on the threshold of success?

Across the porch I glided with every sense on the alert, and I was rising to my feet when a pair of powerful arms encircled me and I was drawn into an embrace that took away my breath.

"Silence!" said a voice at my ear. "You utter a sound and you will make your peace with God."

It was not Marigold's voice. It seemed the voice of some one I had heard before, but where? I felt the hot breath of the speaker on my cheek and wisely refrained from uttering a sound.

"Now will you be silent?"

"Yes," said I. "What is my silence to you?"

"Much. I am here on business——"

"You are Clement Marigold?"

"I know no such person."

"But he came here."

"Was that the man? Clement Marigold, eh? Where is he now?"

"You should know. He crossed the porch?"

"And entered the house?"

"I suppose so."

"For what?"

"You must ask him, not me."

I was now released a little, but still held, and in another moment was pulled across the porch and pushed against the wall.

"I can't hear him in the house, can you?" asked my captor.

"I cannot."

"That is strange, since you say he entered."

"I say he came to the porch here."

"Well, we'll investigate. Come! I know how to open this door."

I heard a door open in the semi-darkness and entered the hall beyond with my unknown companion.

"Wait," said he in the corridor.

"Do you want a light? You will find a lamp in the library to the right."

"Light be cursed!" he growled. "What do I want with a light when I can see like an owl?"

"That's good, but all humans haven't got that faculty. Which way? Upstairs?"

"How did you know?" and the man laughed. "Yes, we'll go up. They say the old place is haunted."

"By the ghost of Cleo Marigold, I suppose?"

I caught the outlines of his figure on the broad stair and then recognized him. It was Pericles Plump, the horse doctor!

"Aren't you coming?" he asked, looking down at me from two steps above. "You're not afraid of the ghost of the woman I killed in this old house?"

"The woman you killed? No."

He led me to the top of the flight and then paused. I was in the act of addressing him, to ask what he was going to do next, when he staggered against me with a wild cry and clutched me fiercely in his terror.

"There she is!" he exclaimed. "There's the ghost of the dead! Look for yourself, Mr. Detective! Can't you see her along the wall, down there, with her face all white and——"

"My eyes are not owl eyes," I interrupted. "You have the advantage of me, Mr. Plump. Go forward and finish your investigation."

His teeth chattered and his knees met as if they had suddenly been stricken with the palsy. I found him leaning heavily against me, his breath coming in little gasps and his face cold.

As yet I had seen nothing. For all I knew the corridor was emptiness itself, but I strained my eyes to catch sight of the object that had struck Pericles Plump with abject terror, while at the same time I essayed to shift my burden from my shoulders.

At last I did so, and the body of the horse doctor rolled to the floor at my feet. I bounded over it and down the corridor. The faint streak of light that struggled into the uncanny place showed me the bare wall, and I suddenly brought up against the end of the passage, where there was a little diamond window.

Throwing out my hands mechanically, for the floor seemed to be sinking under my feet, I essayed to steady myself, but in vain; the underpinning actually gave way and I was precipitated down, down, falling as I imagined into the horrors of a bottomless pit. And suddenly overhead spurted a tongue of fire, a long, snake-like bit of flame, and in the moment of remaining consciousness I thought that the old house was doomed and that I had reached the end of my last trail.

CHAPTER XV.

I GET BACK TO BUSINESS.

Fortunately my sudden descent terminated without the breaking of any bones. I

OUR MOST EXTRAORDINARY AND SPECIAL OFFER TO LADIES AND GIRLS

FIVE PIECE NICKEL
SILVER TEA SET
EASILY EARNED

THIS DAINTY INDIVIDUAL TEA SET is handsomely plated and finished in nickel silver and consists of five pieces as follows: **Tea Pot, Sugar Bowl, Spoon Holder, Cream Pitcher and Twelve Inch Tray.** A neat and useful set that will please every lady who receives it. Warranted with ordinary usage to last for years. Remember this is not a toy set, but of regular table size for "grown people." **LADIES**, do you wish to earn this handsome five piece Tea Set easily? If so, simply dispose of **only six boxes of Grandma's Wonder Healing and Complexion Cream at 75 cents a box.** An elegant medicinal toilet article that whitens and beautifies the complexion, also a grand curative remedy for all Skin Diseases, Eczema, Pimples, Blackheads, Salt Rheum, Sore Eyes, Burns, Scalds, Chafing, Insect Stings, Chapped Hands, Etc., Etc. A reliable and standard preparation of merit that sells quickly at nearly every house. Ladies, send us your full name and address, plainly written, and we will mail you postpaid, six boxes Wonder Toilet Cream on credit. When sold, remit us the money ($1.50) and we will promptly forward, carefully packed, this five piece plated Tea Set, complete. This is one of the most **extraordinary offers** ever made by any responsible concern. **Ladies and Girls**, write us at once for the six boxes Toilet Cream and premium literature. We trust you.

THOMPSON'S CHEMICAL WORKS
Nickel Silver Dept. 52
BRIDGEWATER CONN.

GRANDMA'S WONDER TOILET CREAM IS GUARANTEED UNDER THE FOOD AND DRUGS ACT OF JUNE 30TH, 1906. SERIAL NUMBER 7176.

alighted on some yielding substance, which I soon discovered to be a lot of rugs. I was on my feet in an instant, and upon looking up I saw that the trap which I had started was closed and I was in almost complete darkness.

I must have loosened the spring of the trap-door in some manner and thus imprisoned myself, just when I was on the eve of discovery. My first impulse was to investigate my prison in hopes of soon releasing myself, but I found this easier thought of than accomplished. The place was not large, and I soon circumnavigated it with the assistance of a few matches. It was a room, perhaps, on the first floor of Papyrus Court and seldom visited even by the tenants of the place.

Utter silence rested over and around me. I wondered what had become of Pericles Plump and the man called Clement Marigold. Had they met in the old house, and what had followed the meeting? I thought, even feared, that Marigold had discovered the secret chamber and that I would be robbed of that privilege. I cannot tell how much my fears worried me in the prison nor how I tried to find an outlet. Perhaps no one would look for me, and I would be left there as much buried from the world as if I inhabited a real tomb.

The one door of the room was locked, probably from the opposite side, and strain and tug at it as I would I could not move it at all.

And then the sharp tongue of fire I had seen in falling through the trap? What did it mean? Was the house on fire and would I be incinerated in the old pile?

But all things, even imprisonment, must have an end, and I at last forced the door by throwing myself against it, and as it yielded I threw myself across the threshold and stood in a narrow corridor. It took me some time to get my bearings, though I had Gaston Bland's plans with me, and at last I entered a part of the house with which I was quite familiar.

Not a sound had I encountered, and I began to wonder if the place was not entirely empty.

All at once I heard a sound that held me spellbound, and then I moved down the corridor and stopped at the end of it, while I listened with all ears.

It was the sound of footsteps, and I calculated that the maker of the sound was coming in my direction.

I hugged the gray wall and waited.

There must have been a hall on the other side of the corridor I occupied, for the sounds indicated it. Minutes seemed hours where I stood and waited for I knew not what.

A door opened and I caught sight of a tall figure that entered my hiding place. Was the man looking for me? I leaned forward and tried to make out his figure with some degree of certainty, but the shadows forbade.

At last I saw more. The man came nearer and halted, and I almost let out a cry.

It was Phidias Glenn, the rector!

The minister stood near enough to let me see the anxiety that seamed his face, and I noted that he was troubled and perplexed. He was clad in his sombre black, his hands seemed restless and his eyes—they had the same look as when he confronted Clement Marigold with the revolver in his hand.

So the rector of Moss Mill was in the old house? He had come hither for some purpose, and I resolved that I would fathom the meaning of his visit.

He rewarded me by retaining his position for a little while, and then moved away. I slipped off my shoes while I watched and glided after him.

At last he reached the door of the library. I saw him glance over his shoulder and then he entered. In another moment I became aware that there was a light in the library, and, upon drawing myself upward with the help of the cross-piece of the door, I looked in.

There he was, at Cleo Marigold's private desk, the one in which I had found the bit of paper telling about the secret room and the codicil.

He was oblivious to his surroundings, for he bent over the desk and was ransacking it with his eager brown hands.

I saw him transfer something to an inner pocket, after which he looked around and slowly rose to his feet. His work seemed done and it was my duty to follow him wherever he went.

When he moved toward the door I dropped from my position and he came into the hall, and, bolting past me, ascended the stair.

I waited till he was out of sight and then hastened after him.

On the upper floor I lost sight of him so quickly that I thought he had found the secret chamber and was in it. He was gone as completely as if the floor had opened and swallowed him.

As the reader may imagine, I stood baffled, not to say chagrined, at the thought of being so cleverly outwitted by the rector of Moss Mill, and for some moments I cursed my folly in letting him get the best of me.

Thinking that he would come back and give me another opportunity to discover his scheme, I remained where I was, but the minutes vanished without rewarding my vigils.

At length I went away, intent upon searching another part of the house. If I could not find Phidias Glenn I, at least, could put my knowledge of the location of the hidden chamber to some use, and perhaps I would yet score a victory.

Suddenly I fell back in the little room I had entered, for a man came through a door which I had not opened and I uttered a cry.

Clement Marigold confronted me, the man whom I had seen face to face with Phidias Glenn at the rectory.

He saw me the instant he entered the room, and in another second his hand fell upon my shoulder.

"You here?" he exclaimed. "You are the man I saw at the hotel?"

"The same man," said I.

"What is your profession?"

"I am a detective."

"Ha! I might have guessed it." He laughed a little. "Were you tracking me?"

"Not particularly, though I confess that your coming to this house led me in the same direction."

"And why shouldn't it after what has happened here? This is an old house and now it has another mystery——"

"It has had others, then?"

"Yes."

"It has its secret room——"

"You know that, do you? You have found the secret chamber?"

"I have not found it, as yet, but I have the secret of its location."

He did not speak again for a moment during which time he seemed to be reflecting.

"I ought to trust you," he said slowly. "I have been a man who is still wanted in certain localities, for our old sins rise constantly to plague us."

"Like the rector's, eh?"

He started and gave me a sudden look full of wonderment, not to say suspicion.

"Do you know what the rector has been?"

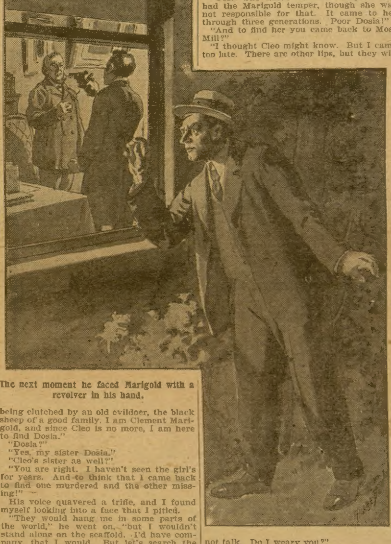
"Not always a rector, I fancy," recalling the conversation I had overheard under the window.

"Not always a rector? You are right," and he smiled again. "I wonder why some men wear the garb they do. But never mind that. Are you here on the same mission that brought me to this house?"

"I am here in the interests of justice. I am here to solve the mystery of Papyrus Court."

He leaned toward me and his hand seized my wrist, the fingers seeming to sink into my flesh and rendering it as cold as ice.

"Don't start," he whispered. "You are being clutched by an old evildoer, the black sheep of a good family. I am Clement Marigold, and since Cleo is no more, I am here to find Dosia."



The next moment he faced Marigold with a revolver in his hand.

"Dosia?"

"Yes, my sister Dosia."

"Cleo's sister as well?"

"You are right. I haven't seen the girl's for years. And to think that I came back to find one murdered and the other missing!"

His voice quavered a trifle, and I found myself looking into a face that I pitied.

"They would hang me in some parts of the world," he went on, "but I wouldn't stand alone on the scaffold. I'd have company, that I would. But let's search the house. Let's find the missing chamber. You don't think Gaston Bland killed her, do you?"

"He has confessed."

"So has that mad horse doctor. It's queer, isn't it?" and pulling me across the room he threw wide the door through which he had entered.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE SECRET DOOR.

In the corridor in which we found ourselves Marigold halted, but not until he had taken me to a window at one end, from which one could obtain a view of a part of the grounds of the estate. It was a little window with a broad sill, and, with a glance at me, my companion waved his hand at the scene below.

"You don't know what scenes this old place calls up," he continued. "I was born here, but the people have forgotten me. This place was my playground and here I used to romp, a boy of five. That was before the evil days came—before I became a smuggler on the wild English coast. I haven't been back here since I went away with a band of strolling gypsies and the people thought I was drowned.

"My sisters grew up here. Dosia was a rolling stone, like myself, but Cleo was different, and remained here and kept the place up, to be killed at last. The other one, as I call Dosia, went mad, and for years her home was the mad-house, but she escaped years ago and I lost sight of her, with the coast guard looking for me.'

"What ever became of Dosia?" I ventured.

"That's just what we may discover before we quit this house.'

I thought of the Lady of the Stair, but did not mention her in his presence.

"Cleo got the whole estate, for I was dead in the eyes of the law," he proceeded. "She lived here, ruling over Papyrus Court with a rod of iron, living like a recluse, though at times she had a companion, I am told."

"She had one the night of the tragedy."

"And who was that person?"

"A girl named Iris Foxcroft."

"Eh?"

"A distant relative, the girl claimed to be."

"We have a lot of relatives. So Iris Foxcroft was here that night?"

"Yes."

"What did she see?"

"More, I believe, than she has told."

"Where is she now?"

"Phidias Glenn got a position for her in the city and she went away a few days ago."

I waited to see what effect the name of the rector of Moss Mill would have upon the ex-smuggler, and was not surprised. He turned red a moment and then changed to pallor.

"He got her a place and sent her away?" he observed. "Do you know why?"

"He said for the good of the town."

"That man lied!" and the face of Marigold came so close to mine that I fell back breathless.

"But I can't get away from Dosia. If I could only find her——"

"Your favorite sister?"

"No, Cleo with all her foibles was that. But Dosia was mad, therefore she was helpless. She had a mania for blood."

"Then she was dangerous?"

"Yes. She killed her first keeper. She had the Marigold temper, though she was not responsible for that. It came to her through three generations. Poor Dosia!"

"And to find her you came back to Moss Mill?"

"I thought Cleo might know. But I came too late. There are other lips, but they will not talk. Do I weary you?"

"No, go on."

"My story is almost done," he went on. "I must find what papers Cleo left behind. She may throw some light upon Dosia's whereabouts. I believe Cleo loved her despite the girl's temper and disordered brain."

Just then, as I moved a little, I was reminded by a slight prickling in my side, that I carried the dagger Pericles Plump had found underneath the carpet.

Drawing it forth I handed it to Marigold with the hilt toward him.

"Heavens! what is that?" he exclaimed with a start.

"It is the weapon that slew."

He took the dagger and leaned forward, letting the brilliant light of the stars sift along its shining surface.

I watched him study it closely for some time, during which he carefully felt the point and edge.

"Where did you get this weapon?" he asked, looking up at me.

"Pericles Plump, the self-accused horse doctor, pulled it from beneath the carpet of the fatal bed-room in my presence."

"And said he put it there?"

I nodded.

"What is this story about Gaston Bland saying that he threw the dagger away after the crime?"

"He has amended his story," said I. "He has thought it over, and now declares that he awoke on the grounds and found the dagger in his hand. He cannot remember dealing the blow, and I am inclined to believe him innocent."

Clement Marigold turned the full force of his deep eyes upon me.

"You have been here how long?"

"I came down upon the call of a telegram soon after the discovery of the crime."

"And you have worked diligently ever since?"

"Yes."

"And you have conclusions, of course? You have been on the ground ever since. Now, sir, tell me who killed Cleo Marigold?"

I almost laughed in his face at the directness of the question. I had not reached the end of the mystery. Two men had confessed the crime, and there were other matters that puzzled me, and, especially, since he (Marigold) had come upon the scene.

"You are baffled," he smiled. "I can see that. You are at your wits end. The crime of Papyrus Court has puzzled you, and perhaps not without reason. Now this dagger," and he held the blade up in the starlight, "this very dagger was wielded by one whom you don't seem to have suspected. You have questioned Iris Foxcroft?"

"Of course."

"And she told you what?"

"She saw a man on the grounds that night."

"Yes? She saw a man, did she? It was not Gaston Bland?"

"She says it was not, but then she is the lover of that man."

"Even lovers tell the truth, some times," smiled Marigold. "Was it Pericles Plump?"

"The girl thought not."

"Who was it, then?"

"She has never said."

"Oh, she never said?"

"I don't know whether she saw the person plainly enough to form a positive opinion."

"And she is not here now. I say, Mr. Geyer—that's your name, I believe—I've seen this dagger before. It is one we found one time among a lot of goods shipped from Italy, and lost on the coast when the ship went to pieces."

"Then in the name of goodness, how came that dagger to Moss Mill?"

"That's one of the mysteries. I don't say that the person who brought it here killed Cleo, but——"

"She was killed with it, though?"

"Yes, if Pericles Plump found it under the carpet. You may wonder how he knew it was there. He either saw the murderer hide it or else he found it and put it there himself. But you can find the murderer. I want to find Dosia."

Clement Marigold ceased and moved away. Replacing the black-handled dagger on my person, I was in the act of following him when he waved me off.

"We won't hunt together, but we'll compare results," said he, as he stood like a statue in the dim light. "I don't want you to keep bad company, therefore I'll hunt alone. Our paths may come together by and by. Good-night, Mr. Geyer."

In a moment he was gone.

I remained motionless till his footsteps had died away, and then, goaded by a sudden impulse, I moved forward. If I was at liberty to hunt alone I would find the secret chamber.

With Gaston Bland's plat in my possession, I could locate the adjoining room and when I had found it I would press the button beside the hearth and solve the mystery of Papyrus Court.

Five minutes later I stood in that room. It was not altogether dark, but I was compelled to resort to a match. By aid of the flame I found the hearth. I saw the letters of the Greek alphabet where Gaston said I would find them, and eagerly I pressed upon "Gamma," and to my astonishment a hidden door swung open and I stood on the threshold of the secret chamber of mystery!

(Continued next week.)

The Future.

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Some straight-laced men have gone crooked.

"Ablutionary studio" is Bostonese for bath-room.

Usually the flower of the family is a blooming nuisance.

The man who boasts of his ignorance has reached the limit.

Most of the sure things we bet on are sure for the other fellow.

Mosquitoes are free from one vice at least. They can't stand cigarette smoke.

When one big trouble comes a man ceases to worry about the little ones.

It's no sign that a cat has money because she carries her purrs with her.

It costs more to live nowadays than it did in the old times, but you get more kinds of life.

As soon as a man is satisfied with himself the neighbors begin to feel sorry for his wife.

One of Cincinnati's most prominent industries is that of raising ball players for clubs in other cities.

Sometimes after a girl has fished for a man and landed him she doesn't know how to get him off the hook.

Romance makes a bee line for the tall timber when a man begins to refer to his wife as the "old woman."

By virtue of a new city directory Pittsburg claims a population of 600,000, mostly well smoked, if not thoroughly cured.

A pessimist thinks it is an ill wind that blows nobody any good but himself. An optimist doesn't care whether it is windy or not.

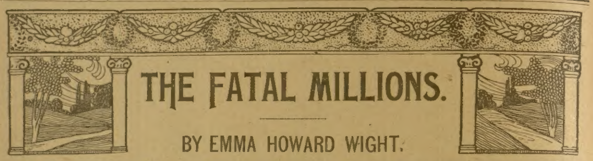
Look you, how can the railways adopt reduced rates of fare, replace their defective rails with good ones, and still declare big dividends? Huh?

If the young man isn't too dense a well-timed yawn on the part of the girl will start him homeward as quickly as the application of paternal shoe leather.

In a spirit of candor and fairness it must be admitted that none of the foolish speeches at that Newport banquet was made by the educated chimpanzee in whose honor it was given.

As to the determination not to be a candidate next year, President Roosevelt thinks it scarcely necessary to issue a proclamation reaffirming it for the special benefit of the South American republics.

Prof. Bob Fitzsimmons, the eminent exponent of fistic science, is about to become a farmer. A practical and thorough acquaintance with the duties of his new calling will assure him that he possesses several muscles of whose existence he has been hitherto unaware.



THE FATAL MILLIONS.

BY EMMA HOWARD WIGHT.

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CHAPTER XXIV.

"I AM YOUR FATHER."

"Willie shall go too, shan't he, Dick?"

"Certainly Willie shall go, if he wishes," Richard Dunting replied, looking down with a smile into Daisy's uplifted face. "Do you want to go to the pantomime, Willie?"

The child shook his head.

"No, thank you, Mr. Dunting, I don't think I care to go," he replied. "I don't like the crowd, and the music and noise make my headache. I'd rather have Daisy tell me all about it when she comes home."

"So I will then," declared Daisy.

"Don't you feel well today, Willie?" asked Dick, as he looked pityingly at the distorted form and small weird face that seemed to grow paler and more wan every day.

Willie smiled the patient sad smile that had so much pathos in it.

"I guess I am always sicker than other people," he replied.

"Poor little chap, I don't think his sufferings will last very much longer," Dick was thinking. "He is simply fading out of life, and it is better so. But I am afraid that my little Daisy will grieve."

Nesta Dungard's child had grown to be the dearest thing on earth to Richard Dunting. He had watched over her during the past four years with the tenderness, almost, of a mother. He had loaded her with toys and sweetmeats and was never tired of devising some new pleasure for her. But he never looked into the sweet, childish face without a pang, for the child was strikingly like her mother.

Of her father the child had hardly more knowledge than she had of her mother, for Winston Dungard was still in England.

"When I feel that I can bear with some degree of fortitude the old familiar scenes, I will return," he wrote his sister, when she urged him to come back. "Even the sight of my child would but add to my suffering, she is so like her mother."

There was an estrangement between Winston and Dick. The latter could not forgive Winston for believing his wife guilty of Horace Dungard's murder.

"In time I may feel less bitter toward him," Dick told himself. "But it can never be between us like it once was."

When Dick and little Daisy returned from the theatre, late in the afternoon, Hammond, who opened the door, touched Dick on the arm.

"Mr. Dunting," he said, and Dick saw that he looked pale and agitated, "Mr. Winston has come back."

Dick started, then he stood irresolute, his first impulse being to leave the house at once.

"Come on, Dick, dear," said Daisy, and Dick allowed the child to draw him along the hall toward the stairway. "Come, let us go to Willie."

As they were passing Mary Dungard's sittingroom, on their way to the nursery, the door opened and Winston Dungard came out and stopped abruptly at the sight of them. At first Dick hardly recognized him. In four years he seemed to have aged twenty. His shoulders were bowed, his face worn and pale, his hair almost white.

In silence the two men looked at each other for the space of a moment or two, and then Winston held out his hand.

"Old friend, have you no welcome for me?" he asked.

Dick had never expected to clasp Winston Dungard's hand in friendship again, and for the moment he hesitated. But the change that suffering had wrought in the man before him, the outstretched hand, the appeal in the haggard eyes, proved too much for tender-hearted Dick Dunting.

With a return of the old affection, which had really never died, he clasped Winston's hand and murmured, brokenly:

"Welcome home, Winston, welcome home."

"Dick! Dick!"

With a start Winston looked down upon little Daisy's wondering, upturned face. The next moment very gently he lifted the child in his arms.

"Won't you kiss me, Daisy?" he murmured, huskily. Then, as the child drew back from him frightened at his pale, working face, he added, with a mixture of appeal and yearning and pain in his voice that brought tears to Dick's eyes. "Child, my child, don't you shrink from me. I am your father."

A little later Daisy ran into the room where Willie lay in his small, white bed, followed by a strange man who looked down upon the boy half pityingly, half shrinkingly.

"Oh, Daisy, how long you have been," murmured Willie, while he looked wonderingly at the strange man.

"I am sorry I was so long, Willie, dear," said Daisy, as she climbed upon the bed, put her arms about Willie's neck and kissed him. "I've brought my papa to see you; he's come home again."

A look of terror leaped suddenly to Willie's eyes. He clasped her arm convulsively with two trembling claw-like hands.

"Oh, Daisy, he has not come to take you away, has he?"

Some of the white terror in the boy's face was reflected in Daisy's as she lifted her eyes to Winston's.

"No, no," Winston hastened to reassure them. "I have not come to take Daisy away."

A long sigh of unspeakable relief left Willie's lips.

"Will you stay with me, Daisy, until I go to sleep? I am so tired."

"Yes, I will stay," she replied, as she nestled down beside him.

And Winston went quietly away and left them.

It was about an hour later when the nurse came into the room and went up to the bed. The children lay clasped in each other's arms; both were apparently sleeping, but, as the nurse bent lower over the bed, she saw that one of them was dead.

Gratia was in her dressingroom arrayed in gold colored silk and black lace for some fashionable gathering, when they came and told her.

"Poor little fellow, his sufferings are over," Mary Dungard sobbed.

Gratia did not speak. She stood staring into the mirror that had reflected her radiant beauty, her black and gold draperies and the blaze of the diamonds in her hair and on her breast. She paled a little and shivered, but in her heart there struggled into her life a feeling of unspeakable relief that the grave would hide forever that distorted body.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE CONDITION.

"I am not sure that Mrs. Dungard can see you, sir," said Hammond.

Herbert Edmondson smiled grimly.

"You have orders not to admit me, I suppose?"

"Well—yes, sir," Hammond admitted with some reluctance.

"Nevertheless, I think that Mrs. Dungard will receive me," said Herbert Edmondson, quietly. "Go to her and say that I wish to see her on a matter of importance to herself."

"Well, sir, if you insist I suppose I must do so." Hammond stood aside so that Herbert Edmondson could enter. "I suppose you know, Mr. Edmondson, that Willie is dead," he added, as Edmondson stepped into the hall.

"No, I was not aware of it," Edmondson replied. "I only returned from abroad yesterday. How long has he been dead?"

"Two weeks. Mr. Winston had to take little Daisy away, she grieved so after Willie."

"Has Winston Dungard returned?" Herbert Edmondson asked, quickly.

"Yes, sir, he came back two weeks ago, the very night that Willie died."

"Hammond, did anything ever come to light relative to the escape of Nesta Dungard?"

"No, sir, nothing," Hammond replied.

"It certainly was very mysterious."

"Yes, sir, it was."

"I suppose you have never had a doubt as to her guilt, Hammond?"

"No, sir, it didn't seem to me possible that the murder could have been committed by any one else."

"I suppose Mrs. Dungard believed her guilty?"

"I don't know, sir, I never heard her say. I'll tell Mrs. Dungard that you are here," he added, with the evident intention of bringing the conversation to an end.

"So Gratia's child is dead," thought Herbert Edmondson, as he went toward the drawingroom. "She is glad no doubt. My God! It's not to be wondered at that she should have brought into the world a child branded by nature. And, yet, even the knowledge of her guilt has not been able to kill my passion for her. In spite of all I want her for my own."

He was standing looking up at Gratia's portrait when a little later she entered the room. He did not hear her enter, and was unaware of her presence until she stood at his side and spoke his name.

He turned and looked at her for a moment in silence. She met his eyes steadily, coldly. If she were at all disturbed she gave no sign of it. No word of greeting passed between them and she was the first to speak.

"You claim that you have something of importance to say to me," she said. "What is it?"

"Yes, I have something of importance to say to you," he replied. "I think I told you when I saw you last that I believed there were certain episodes in your life that you would not care for the world to know and that I would make it my business to discover what they were. You will understand that I have been successful in so doing when I tell you that I have paid a visit to St. Crest, Italy."

She started slightly, but the next moment she smiled contemptuously.

"Indeed! And may I ask what wonderful discovery you made at St. Crest?"

"That is what I have come here to tell you. It was at St. Crest that you first met Hugh Delavan; he was your lover, you had promised to become his wife, but you threw him over and married Horace Dungard for his money."

She laughed mockingly.

"I cannot congratulate you upon having made any very original discovery," she remarked. "If it is as you claim, it is not the first time that a woman was false to one man in order to marry another for his money."

"You are right, the case, as you put it, is not exceptional!" He moved nearer to her as he spoke. "But it seldom happens that the woman murders the man she has married in order that she may marry her lover."

She started back from him, and for the moment, she crouched like an animal that has been struck. Then she drew herself erect and smiled with lips that were colorless, a ghastly mockery of a smile.

"Are you drunk?" she asked, "or have you gone mad?"

"It is quite useless to take that tone with me," he said, quietly. "I know that Nesta Dungard is innocent and that it was you who murdered Horace Dungard. I can prove that you had a more powerful incentive to murder your husband than the unfortunate woman who has suffered for your crime. There is one whom I know cannot doubt your guilt—the man you love, Hugh Delavan."

Her limbs seemed suddenly to fail her and she dropped into a chair.

There was an awful hunted look in her eyes as she lifted them to his face and asked, in a whisper:

"What do you intend to do?"

It was a moment before he replied.

"When you say that I am mad I am almost inclined to believe that you are right," he said, at length. "Knowing you to be what you are, I should shrink from you in horror, but, instead of that, my passion for you is as strong, as clamorous as ever. I will spare you upon one condition."

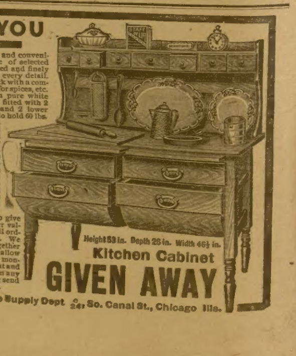
He paused.

"And that condition is—what?" she asked.

"That you become my wife?"

"And if I refuse?"

"Then I shall make public all that I have learned. It is possible that the murder of your husband could not be brought home to you, but the shadow of that black suspicion would always darken your life and you would lose the man you love. Hugh Delavan is not the kind of a man to marry a woman who there is every reason to sup-



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Co-Operative Supply Dept C 241 So. Canal St., Chicago Ills.

pose has been guilty of a crime. He loves you, now, yes, but a man of his artistic temperament would be the first to shrink from you in horror and his love would quickly change to repulsion. You know this as well as I. I am made of coarser fibre."

"Will nothing induce you to spare me?" she asked. "Why do you wish to marry a woman who hates you?"

"Because you are so beautiful, my Gratia, and I want you as I never wanted anything else in all the world. No, I will spare you only on the condition I have named."

She flashed a look upon him of unspeakable hatred.

"Aren't you afraid that Horace Dungard's fate may be yours also, if I consent to marry you?" she asked.

He laughed.

"Oh, I shall take due precaution to guard against that," he replied.

"What precaution?" she asked.

"Why, on the day that you become my wife I would place a certain statement in the hands of my lawyers to be opened in case of my dying an unnatural death. You can perhaps guess the nature of that statement and what it would mean for you."

Her eyes fell, she sat for some moments in silence, then she looked up again.

"Will you give me time to think over the matter and come to a decision?" she asked.

He hesitated, and she added, quickly:

"I do not require very much time. Come here at ten o'clock tonight and you shall have your answer."

She arose, as she spoke, and he wondered a little at the sudden calmness.

There seemed to be nothing to do but acquiesce, but he did it reluctantly.

"Let it be so then," he said. "I will come this evening."

And then he left her.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE DECISION.

When Hugh Delavan came to Gratia the evening following Edmondson's visit, he thought he had never seen her quite so beautiful before. She wore a black lace gown, through which her exquisite shoulders and arms gleamed like marble. Her great dusky eyes shone like stars; there was a touch of rare color in her cheeks, and her lips were vividly scarlet.

"My darling," he murmured, as he folded her in his arms, "its difficult for me to realize even now that one week from today you will be all my own. It seems like too much happiness."

"Hugh, would you be very unhappy if anything should happen to separate us?" she asked. "Could you, after a little while, perhaps, go on living your life contentedly though I were gone from you forever?"

He put her a little from him so that he could look into her face.

"Gratia, what do you mean? Why do you talk like that?" he asked. "It nearly broke my heart when I lost you before. My life would not seem worth the living were I to lose you again. But tell me why do you speak in this manner?"

"To have you tell me how necessary I am to your happiness," she replied. "No, dear, there is nothing that can separate us, nothing. Tell me that you forgive me, dearest for marrying Horace Dungard, when all my heart, my soul were yours."

"Dear, let us not speak of that, now. You know I forgave you long ago, or I would never have yielded to your wish and come to New York. God knows how hard it was for me to see you, to be with you and know that you were the wife of another man. But why do we sadden ourselves with such talk as this?"

"True, when we can be so happy. Come, and sit down on this couch, Hugh. Now, take me in your arms, darling, and tell me again and again that you love me, love me more than all the world."

He drew her close to his breast, he whispered tender words, he kissed passionately her lips, her eyes, her throat, her hair. She clung to him responding to his caresses with passionate abandonment.

After a little while she gently disengaged herself from his arms and arose.

"I am thirsty," she said. "We will have some champagne."

She rang the bell and when Hammond entered, told him to bring a bottle of champagne. Hammond brought the wine and placed it, with two fragile glasses, on a table some little distance from the couch on which Hugh Delavan still sat. Hammond drew the cork from the bottle and left the room as Gratia filled the two glasses.

As Delavan arose and came forward, she turned with the two glasses in her hands. There was a smile on her lips as she handed him one of the glasses filled with the sparkling wine.

"To my queen," he said, as he lifted the glass to his lips.

She waited until he had drunk the wine, then lifted her own glass to her lips.

* * * * * * * * *

Promptly at ten o'clock Herbert Edmondson rang the bell at the Dungard residence and was admitted by Hammond.

"Mrs. Dungard is in the drawing-room, Mr. Edmondson," the butler said. "She is expecting you, I think."

"Is she alone?"

"No, sir, Mr. Delavan is with her."

Edmondson frowned.

"Strange that she should have him here," he said to himself, as he went toward the drawing-room.

A few minutes later, as Hammond was passing the drawing-room door on his way to the butler's pantry, he heard a cry and the next moment Herbert Edmondson came rushing out into the hall, his face ashen white.

"In the name of Heaven, sir, what has happened?" cried Hammond.

Edmondson caught hold of the balustrade to steady himself. He was trembling all over and his teeth chattered.

"They are dead, both of them," he cried.

"Who are dead?" asked Hammond.

"Gratia Dungard and Hugh Delavan."

"Oh, come now, Mr. Edmondson, I am afraid you don't know what you are saying," exclaimed Hammond, incredulously. He had come to the conclusion that Herbert Edmondson was insane from drink.

"Go and see for yourself," said Edmondson. "Gratia Dungard and Hugh Delavan are in there dead, and I believe that she killed herself and him."

"Oh, Lord!" cried the butler, as he threw up his hands in infinite horror. "What awful curse rests upon this house?"

And then he went shiveringly into the brilliantly lighted drawing-room, fragrant with hot-house flowers, where Hugh Delavan sat in a blue velvet chair, one arm clasped about the neck of Gratia as she knelt at his feet with her head upon his breast.

They were both dead.

CHAPTER XXVII.

"I FORGIVE HIM FOR MY CHILD'S SAKE."

The "White Lady" stood in her little garden, her hands full of white and purple lilacs. It was an exquisite spring morning, the soft warm air fragrant with the perfume of flowers.

"How beautiful God's world is," the "White Lady" murmured. "And, yet the very beauty of nature seems to mock us when our hearts are heavy with sorrow. I try so hard to be patient, to be brave, but there are times when hope seems dead in my heart."

Down the white winding road a man came swiftly. The "White Lady" did not see him until he had passed through the little gate, stood at her side and spoke the name she had not heard for nearly five long years.

"Nesta!"

She turned and looked at him in silence for a moment, while the lilacs fell from her nerveless hands to the ground. Then, with a low cry, she held out her hands to him.

"Richard! Richard!"

He took her hands in his, drew her gently to him, and for the first and last time in his life, kissed her upon her brow.

She clung to him, her breath coming pantingly.

"Richard," she murmured, "you said you would come to me when God had made known my innocence, and—and you have come."

"Yes, dear, I have come," he said, with infinite gentleness. "Come to tell you that the black shadow of another's guilt has been lifted from you. The truth is known at last."

"Who—who did it?" she asked.

Richard Dunting hesitated.

"Don't ask me to tell you that now, Nesta," he said. "A little later when you are calmer you shall know all."

He watched her anxiously, while he was speaking, but no suspicion of the truth crossed her mind, it was evident. He knew what a terrible shock it would be to her when she learned the truth and he wished to spare her as long as possible.

"Oh, Richard," she looked at him with a great eagerness, a great hope in her eyes, "have you brought my little child?"

"No, Nesta, it was such a long journey for so young a child that we thought it wiser not to bring her," Richard replied.

"We?" she looked at him with sudden questioning in her eyes.

"Yes, Nesta. You can guess, perhaps, who has come with me. He is at the priest's house waiting. He dared not come to you until assured of your forgiveness. He did you a wrong, Nesta, but he has suffered terribly. You will forgive him?"

"Richard, when I was accused of an awful crime, I wanted my husband's love—the love that is unquestioning in its faith and trust—far more than I want it now. But it failed me then. When I read in his eyes that he believed me guilty, I think my love for him died. I forgive him for the sake of our child, but I do not think that I ever wish to look upon his face again."

"Nesta, I cannot believe that you really feel that way. You are too gentle, too womanly a woman. And, believe me, your love for your husband is not dead. It is numbed, but it will awaken to life again."

"Perhaps you are right," she said, after a moment. "But it will never be quite like the old love, Richard. Go, bring him to me, he is the father of my child." Then, as he was turning away, she again held out her hands to him. "God bless you, Richard," she murmured, lifting her eyes to his face. "You are the truest friend a woman ever had."

For a moment he held her hands and looked into her eyes, then in silence he turned away. His was a love that gave all and asked nothing in return, so he was content to be her true friend. He had done his best for the husband who had failed his wife in the hour of her greatest need, but he knew that Nesta spoke the truth when she declared that her love could never be the same as of old.

Nesta was still standing in her garden when Winston came to her alone. For a moment they stood looking into each other's faces. The change that those years of suffering had wrought neither shocked nor surprised them. It seemed but natural. Then Winston spoke:

"Nesta, my poor wronged wife, you have forgiven me?"

He held out his arms.

A faint, sad smile flitted across her lips.

Then she went to him.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

GRATIA'S CONFESSION.

That night, Nesta, pale with horror and filled with amazement, learning that it was Gratia Dungard who had murdered her husband, and had so arranged that the guilt would fall upon her, Nesta. She had written a confession on the afternoon of the night she took her own and her lover's life, in which she confessed her guilt, and told how she contrived to make it appear that Nesta Dungard had committed the murder.

She had remained at the door leading into the library after Nesta went in and had overheard the conversation that followed. She had waited to learn what Mr. Brice's business was, and had learned that her husband would sign his new will that night. At twelve o'clock she had arisen and gone into the boudoir. Nesta was sleeping soundly. Gratia took the jeweled dagger from the table, unlocked the door leading into the library bedroom and passed through to the other door. She opened the door cautiously and looked in. Horace Dungard was sitting at his desk writing. She crept across the room and stabbed him in the back. The blood, as it gushed from the wound, stained her hands and the front of her nightdress.

The nightdress she wore was almost exactly like the one worn by Nesta. Gratia passed from the library, leaving the dagger on the floor beside the murdered man, removed her nightdress in the library bedroom and threw it upon the canopy over the bed. She then looked into the boudoir, and finding that Nesta was still sleeping, she entered. She locked the door and drew the portiers, upon which she purposely left stains of blood. She then washed her hands in the bowl containing the roses, and went into her bedroom. There was but one thing needed to complete the chain of circumstantial evidence against Nesta, and that was to obtain possession of the nightdress in which she, Nesta had slept, and secrete it. This she succeeded in doing when Hammond discovered the murder and gave the alarm, and the maid and Nesta rushed out into the hall. She concealed the nightdress and later she destroyed it.

In the confession she told how she, with the help of Richard Dunting, had effected Nesta's escape. One of the night wardens had an only son, whom he idolized. Richard, who ingratiated himself with all the wardens in the hope of finding one amenable to his purpose, learned that Jacob Hunt's son had gotten himself into trouble, and that unless quite a large sum of money would be forthcoming, would have to suffer the penalty of his wrong-doing. Cautiously approaching the subject, he promised the old warden twice the amount if he would bring about Nesta's escape.

It is said "that every man has his price." The warden was an honest man, who had faithfully performed his duty for many years, but his love for his wayward son was the strongest feeling of his life. He consented.

The warden had a brother who was captain of a small trading vessel. He was paid a large sum of money to take to Liverpool an old quaker and his daughter. From Liverpool the warden and Nesta had gone to Ireland, and accidently hearing of the remote Irish village, they had gone there with the intention of finding a refuge for Nesta. The warden had left Nesta there and gone to London where his son joined him.

Gratia said nothing in her confession of her intention to kill her lover and herself, but the autopsy revealed the fact that both had died of arsenical poisoning, and there could be no doubt of its having been administered by herself.

What had driven the wretched woman to confess her crime, and then take her own life and her lover's, will always remain a mystery. There was but one man who knew the truth and he carried the secret to his grave.

Herbert Edmondson died a fearful death of delirium tremens in less than a year after Gratia Dungard's tragic death.

To little Daisy Dungard, Gratia had bequeathed the fatal millions, for the possession of which she had first sold herself, and then committed so dreadful a crime. Pinned to the confession was a slip of paper upon which was written:

"I leave Daisy Dungard, daughter of Winston and Nesta Dungard, all the money of which I die possessed.

GRATIA DUNGARD."

"I do not want my child to have that money, it's accursed," Nesta cried, when she was informed of the above.

It was a long time before she could become entirely reconciled to little Daisy's inheriting the money which had proved so fatal, not alone to the man who had spent the greater part of his life in amassing it, but to so many others.

The greater part of the income from those millions is spent in charity, and so, perhaps, the curse that appeared to rest upon them has been changed into a blessing.

The end.

DRUNKARDS
CURED SECRETLY

Any Lady Can Do It at Home.
Costs Nothing to Try.

A MODERN MIRACLE.

A new tasteless and odorless discovery which can be given secretly by any lady in tea, coffee or food. Heartily endorsed by temperance workers. It does its work so silently and surely that while the devoted wife, sister or daughter looks on, the drunkard is reclaimed even against his will and without his knowledge. Many have been cured in a single day.

FREE TRIAL COUPON

A free trial package of the wonderful Golden Remedy will be sent you by mail, in plain wrapper, if you will fill in your name and address on blank lines below, cut out the coupon and mail it at once to Dr. J. W. Haines, 461 Glenn Building, Cincinnati, Ohio.

You can then prove to yourself how secretly and easily it can be used, and what a God-send it will be to you.

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★ For Birth-date and 2-1c stamps, I will mail you complete picture of your life from birth to death. PROF. RAKO, Dept. 6, Stratford, Conn. ★

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Gold Watch AND RING FREE
We positively give both a Solid Gold Laid STEM WIND American movement Watch highly engraved and fully warranted timekeeper equal in appearance to a Solid Gold Watch; also a Solid Gold Laid Ring, set with a Famous Congo Gem, sparkling with the fiery brilliancy of a $50 diamond, for selling 20 pieces of handsome jewelry at 10c each. Order 20 pieces and when sold send us the $2.00 and we will positively send you the watch and ring; also a chain, Ladies or Gents style. ALTON WATCH CO., Dept. 4 Chicago.

Lady's Genuine Diamond Ring $1 A MONTH
An absolutely Genuine Diamond Ring. The U. S. Government will protect you by arresting us if this is not a genuine diamond ring after advertising it as a diamond. $1.00 a month buys this beautiful solitaire diamond ring in semi Tiffany setting. Only $2.00 down and $1.00 a month for 5 months—$7.00 in all for a real diamond ring. You wear the ring while paying. Write at once for circular. Address D. M. STEVENS & CO., DIAMOND IMPORTERS, 158 W. Congress Street, Dept. B, CHICAGO.

Read Our Great Offer

Send us your name and address at once and we will send you postpaid 24 packages of our popular souvenir postcards, 10 cards in each pkg., to sell at 10c per pkg. or one cent a card. Everybody will be glad to buy one or more packages from you at this low price. When sold send us the $2.40 and we will send you a handsome stem-wind and stem-set watch and chain at once or, if you prefer you can keep $1.00 for your trouble and send us $1.40. This is a fine opportunity for boys, girls or anybody to make lots of money. Write today. We trust you with the cards.

MYER ART CO., Postcard Dept. 35 F, CHICAGO.

When answering advertisements you will favor the advertiser and the publishers by mentioning The Chicago Ledger.

MY ALUMINUM EYE CUP FREE

I will send my Aluminum Eye Cup free to everyone afflicted with any Eye Trouble. I care not whether you are suffering with the most serious and complicated disease of the Eye, whether you have Inflammation of the Eye Ball or Granulation of the Eye Lids you should have one of my Eye Cups in your house for prompt and immediate use. It is the newest, up-to-date and most effective way of applying remedies to the Eye. It is made from beautiful, white Aluminum, from molds specially constructed at great expense for the purpose; is lighter, more sanitary and in every way better than any other style or material yet devised. I will send you one without a cent of cost and at the same time will forward you in addition

5 Days' Treatment and My Eye and Ear Book FREE

My Free Eye and Ear Book tells in plain, simple language how all diseases and defects of the Eye, such as Failing Eyesight, Cataract, Granulated Lids, Scums, Sore Eyes, etc., may be successfully treated by my patients in their own homes. It tells how deaf people, except those born deaf, may be restored to perfect hearing. It tells how to quickly relieve and cure Distressing Head Noises, Ringing and Buzzing in the Ears, Discharging Ears and Catarrh. It tells all about my Mild Medicine Method, which has restored sight and hearing to scores of supposedly incurable patients in every State.

Shows how Very Simple and Easy to use.

Send No Money Simply send your name and address on a post card and you will receive by return mail My Aluminum Eye Cup, 5 Days' Treatment and Eye & Ear Book—all Free.

DR. F. G. CURTS, 860 Gumbel Building, KANSAS CITY, MO.

Good Guess.

"That William Jones who came in for treatment a little while ago," said the hospital attendant, "didn't give his occupation."

"What was the nature of his trouble?" asked the resident physician.

"Injury at the base of the spine."

"Put him down as a book agent."

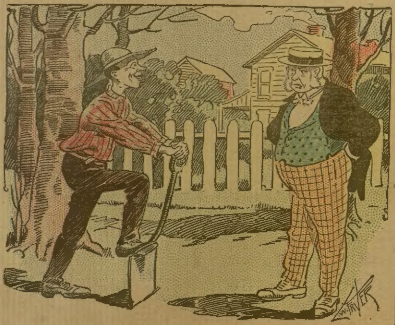
Not Spoiled.

"Are you hurt, John?"

"Yes, dear. I am afraid three or four of my ribs are broken."

"Well, don't feel bad; it doesn't show."

JOKES AND



Mr. Subbubs—Why, James, what did you just now bury there?
James—I wuz just replanting the garden, sor.
Mr. Subbubs—But it looked suspiciously like one of my prize hens.
James—Well, sor, it's all the same, sor, the seeds wus inside.

A Virtue of Necessity.

Manager—I can't do a thing with Smith, the new clerk. I've had him in three departments, and he dozes all day long.

Proprietor—Put him at the pajama counter, and fasten this card on him, "Our night-clothes are of such a superior quality that even the clerk who sells them cannot keep awake."

Better Memory.

They met face to face at a seaside resort.

"Let me see," the young man said. "Miss—er—wasn't I engaged to you once?"

"Twice," answered the young woman, bowing coldly and passing on.

The Living Proof.

Hyker—Browning's wife must be an intellectual woman.

Pyker—Why do you think so?

Hyker—I notice he seldom has any buttons on his clothes.

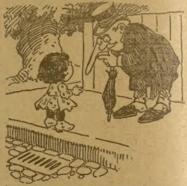
Ladies, Preserve Your Youthful Appearance.

Madame Mignette's Beauty Cream and Skin Food removes every defect, spot, freckle, pimple, blemish or wrinkle, leaving the skin soft, clear and smooth. It is perfectly harmless and will not injure the most delicate skin. It preserves and brings back the youthful glow to the face and ruddiness to the cheeks, preserving it in this condition until extreme old age. This preparation has been used for years and hundreds are now using it and are more than delighted with the results.

Send us ten (10) cents for formula which you can have filled at any drug store at a very small cost. Do not delay, but write at once. Box 491, Blairsville, Pa.

CURE FOR LIQUOR AND TOBACCO.

The Kansas Anti-Liquor Society is mailing free a recipe for the cure of the liquor habit. It can be given secretly in food. Also one for the tobacco habit that can be given secretly. The only request they make is that you do not sell recipes, but give copies to friends. Address Kansas Anti-Liquor Society, 15 Gray Bldg., Kansas City, Mo.



Dolly—Are you de doctor what brung us our new baby?

Doctor Pillem—Yes, my little dear.

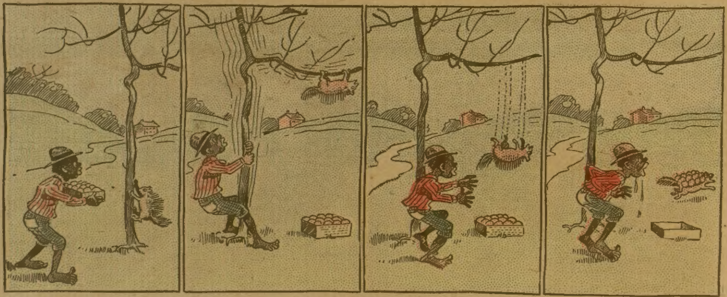
Dolly—Well, you stop it. Everytime a new one comes pop has to sell anudder dog, an' we only got one pup left.

Caste.

Big Calf (vainly)—Get out of my way or I'll step on you. You're nobody.

Barnyard Fowl (haughtily)—If you could hear folks grumble when they find veal in chicken salad you'd change your tune.

IT DIDN'T WORK.



Sammy Shade—If dar ain't dat old Brer Porcupine ag'in, runnin' up dat tree.

"I'll jus' lay dese apples down an' den percede to give him a good——

"Bump——

"! ! ! !"

Moral Difficulty.

"If the big trusts and monopolies rob the people——"

"Yes."

"And the Government carries out its announced policy——"

"Yes."

"Won't the people the Government puts in charge of the bad trusts be receivers of stolen goods?"

Absent Treatment.

"I hear a report that old Hunks and his family are getting along peaceably now."

"The report is true. Old Hunks is away on his vacation."

Wise.

"Do you know," she said, softly, to the young man who sat in the hammock with her, "I dreamt last night that we were engaged."

"Isn't it strange," said the young man, quickly, "how still the lake is today?"

He had been caught on that game once before and was dead wise.

Shocking Reversal of Form.

Contemplative Boarder—Heaven, we are told, lies all about us.

Argumentative Boarder—Yes, in our infancy. As we grow older we all do a good deal of lying about Heaven.

AGENTS WANTED

Nearly all the readers of THE LEDGER will find these advertisements of interest to them. There will be found among them some excellent chances of making money by selling goods to friends, neighbors and others. Those seeking such an opportunity either as a regular or temporary occupation, should write the advertisers whose offers follow.

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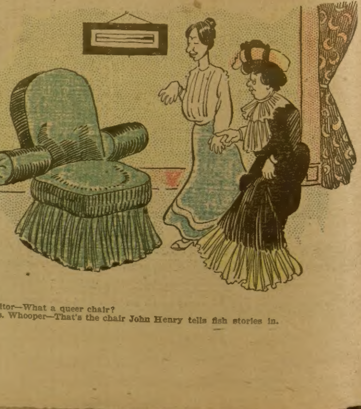
Wanted District Manager. Make $200 a Month

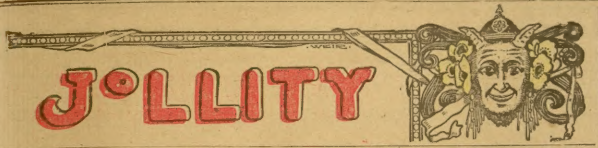
representing us in the sale of our goods, also to appoint and take charge of Sub-agents. A No. 1 proposition for energetic gentleman or lady. Finest goods, grand selection of free premiums. First-class concern. Biggest kind of an opportunity to get established in business. No money required. Liberal credit. Address for particulars

THE GREAT EASTERN COFFEE & TEA CO.
302 S. 10th Street, St. Louis, Mo.

HAS TO HAVE ROOM.



Visitor—What a queer chair?
Mrs. Whooper—That's the chair John Henry tells fish stories in.



Working the Charm.

The Widow—Thirty-five is the most charming age in woman.

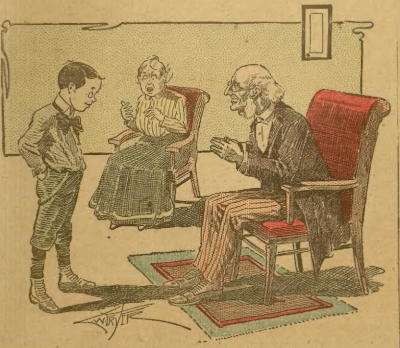
The Bachelor—That's right. It's hard to get away from a woman of that age.

Once Was Enough.

City Niece—Aren't you going to dress for dinner, Uncle Hiram?

Uncle Hiram—Dress fer dinner! Why, I done dressed afore breakfast, by grass!

IMPROVED.



Mr. Smiley—Well, James, I suppose you say your prayers every night?

James—I don't any more 'cause the new street light shines in my room and I ain't afraid in the light.

A Dainty Little Maid.

Every one ought to have her. She is dressed in pretty colors and changes the color of her skirt herself when it is going to rain. She indicates when it is wise to take an umbrella or when you can do without. She is the simplest and best of barometers. She is an ornament, a good seller for agents, a pretty gift, a good business souvenir and useful to any one. She or one of her sisters comes postpaid with full directions for only 10 cents. W. P. Randolph & Co., 78 Dearborn St., Chicago.

Brevity Is the Soul.

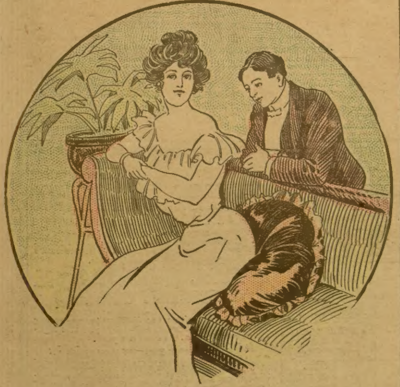
In a Tennessee court an old colored woman was put on the witness stand to tell what she knew about the annihilation of a hog by a railway locomotive.

Being sworn, she was asked if she had seen the train kill the hog in question.

"Yassah, I seed it."

"Then," said the counsel, "tell the court in as few words as possible just how it occurred."

"Yo' honor," responded the old lady, "I shore kin tell yo' in a few words. It jes' tooted an' tuck him."



Jack—So Tom tried to kiss you and you turned him down? Will you let me kiss you?

Eva (in pet)—Didn't I just tell you that I wouldn't stand any tomfoolery?

Jack—But my name is not Tom.

Sort He Chooses.

Biggs—Bifkins is a man who is never at a loss when it comes to choosing a word.

Diggs—No, but he chooses so many words that are only printed in dashes.

One of Them.

"Jinks is an undoubted genius."

"But he acts like an ordinary man."

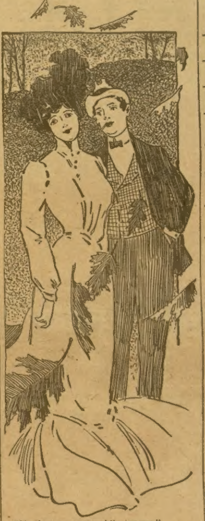
"Well, all geniuses have their little eccentricities."

Abandoned the Struggle.

"Didn't you ever have any ambition in life?" asked the austere matron standing in the kitchen door.

"Wunst, ma'am," said Tuffold Knutt, sighing deeply. "I have not allus led this butterfly existence. Many years ago, ma'am, I tried to raise a pair o' elegant side whiskers, but they wouldn't grow. Since then I hain't had no heart to do anything."

This mournful story failing to awaken her sympathies, he shambled on to the next house.



"She has an automobile tongue."

"What do you mean?"

"Oh, she's always running other people down."

Just a Gentleman.

"You don't mean to say," said Peppery, "that you absolutely do nothing."

"Aw," replied Cholly, wearily, "I don't even do that. My man attends to ev'rything, you know."

He Did.

"Does her husband enter with spirit into her housekeeping plans?"

"Yes, he entered with his tank full of spirits last night."

Beat Him One Way.

As Mark Twain and a friend were chatting at the summer home of the humorist, Quarry farm, near Elmira, New York, the conversation turned to the wealth of John D. Rockefeller.

"Just think of it, Sam," said the guest, "he has more dollars than there are hairs in that vigorous old thatch of yours."

"That's nothing," replied Mr. Clements, "I have more dollars than he has hairs in his head."

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LOVE AND VILLAINY.

A STORY OF THE RANCH LANDS. BY THOMAS P. MONTFORT.

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Begun in No. 33, August 17. Subscriptions can begin with that issue, or back copies can be obtained from news stands, or our agents, or by mail from office of publication.

CHAPTER XVIII.

SOME MORE INFORMATION.

Two hours later the cowboys were all seated at the supper table. Old Dick and Abe were among them. They were silent, grim and determined.

Nothing had been said about the incident in which Abe, Dick and Daniels had just figured. The two latter had agreed that it would be better not to mention it unless it should become necessary.

Dick had said that there was no knowing how the boys would take it if they knew. It might be possible to hold them in restraint and it might not. They would certainly be wrathy, and more than likely they would insist on lynching Daniels immediately, regardless of the promise made to him.

The best thing to do, he argued, was to keep quiet, and, if Daniels went away as he had agreed, let the matter forever remain a secret. If he failed to go—well, then would be time enough to tell.

Abe had consented to this, and so the affair rested.

There had been a full minute of silence at the table when Andy Scott casually remarked:

"I reckon this is Miss Clyde's last day at the ranch."

Abe gave a start and looked up quickly. His eyes met those of old Dick, and a flash of understanding passed between them.

"So Daniels had won her consent to an immediate marriage, and she was going with him," they both thought. "In spite of all she clung to him."

"Last day?" Shorty questioned.

"Yep," Andy answered.

"Why, how is that?"

"I dunno. I heard her an' Anderson talkin', and she said she was goin' to leave tomorrow."

"Wal, I'll swan!"

Everybody ate on industriously for a while, and Abe waited in suspense to hear more. Finally some one said:

"I wonder what that's for?"

"Wonder what what's for?" some one else asked.

"Why, Miss Clyde's goin' away."

"Dunno," Andy answered. "Guess mebby Mrs. Anderson don't need her no more."

"Wonder whar she's goin'?"

"Back home, I reckon."

There was another long pause, then somebody remarked:

"About Daniels, now."

"What 'bout him?"

"I wonder if he's goin', too?"

"Very likely, I guess."

"Along of her?"

"Wouldn't be surprised. What you think 'bout it, Andy?"

"Ain't heard nobody say nothin' 'bout that, but I got a notion he'll go, and along of her too."

"You think so?"

"I shore do. Seems plain enough to me they're goin' back home to git married."

"What makes all that so plain to you, Andy?" old Dick questioned.

"Why, blame it all, how could it help bein' plain, man. Ain't it been understood all along that they are goin' to marry, and, sich bein' the case, ain't it reasonable they'd be goin' back to git married now?"

"Mebby that's so," Dick answered thoughtfully. "And yit——"

"And yit what?"

"Oh, nothin'."

"You doubt it, do you?"

"I ain't doubtin' nothin'."

Old Dick lapsed into a somber mood. He had not a word to say to any one, but now and then his eyes wandered over to Abe, and there was an eager inquiring look in this.

Abe saw and understood, and was restless and uneasy. He knew old Dick's mind was in a volcanic state and was on the point of breaking out.

A minute or so passed, and then old Dick muttered under his breath:

"Jest the purtiest tree for the purpose I ever see. Must a-growed jest for that."

"What you growlin' 'bout, Dick?" Shorty asked.

Before Dick could reply Abe said:

"Dick's thinkin' of something we were talking about this afteronon. It's a secret between us, and we are both pledged as men of honor not to tell what it is. That's so, isn't it, Dick?"

Old Dick hesitated, then nodded his consent. But it was reluctantly done.

"I'd like to know what mighty secret you two can have between you," Andy said, "and why we can't come in on it?"

"You wouldn't want a man to break his solemn promise, would you?" Abe asked quickly.

"No. Of course not."

"Well, that's just what we would do if we told you anything now. I won't break my word and I know Dick won't."

Dick waited a moment, after which he got up and left the table. Abe presently arose and followed. Outside the two met.

"See here, Abe," Dick began. "I ain't goin' to be able to hold in. I jest know I can't do it."

"But you must," Abe urged. "We agreed to it, and we must keep our word."

"But I can't, I tell you. Think of that scoundrel goin' off with that woman to marry her, when he ain't nothin' but a cold-blooded murderer. Why, if ever a man ought to be hung it's him."

"I know. But for her sake!"

"Damn her sake! It would be doin' a whole lot more for her if we hung him at once."

"But she knows all about him. You told her."

"Yes. But what good did it do. She thanks me all right, and says she knows what she is doin'."

"But you won't tell, Dick. Promise me again you won't."

"I'll try not to. But I've got to go off to myself if I don't. I can't hold in if I stay around here."

"Well, go out on the prairie and stay till the time is up."

Dick went, but he did not stay till the six hours had passed.

CHAPTER XXIX.

DANIELS LEARNS SOMETHING.

Abe, too, left the ranch and walked off across the prairie. All along he had hoped that there was some mistake and that Miss Clyde had no intentions of marrying Daniels. The information that Andy had just imparted, however, knocked that hope squarely in the head.

In spite of all her knowledge of the man—in spite of the fact that he was an assassin, and that Dick had told her so—in spite of all these things she was going away with him to become his wife.

The thing seemed incredible, but none the less, it was only too apparently true.

"Oh, woman, woman!" he thought. "What fool things you will do in the name of love!"

Abe went out to the knoll, where he had saved her life from the stampede, and sat down in the shadow of a bush, with his elbows on his knees and his face in his hands.

He made a sad and dejected picture, sitting there in that forlorn attitude, all alone on that wide expanse of plain. But he did not look more forlorn than he felt, and the broad barren prairie was not more desolate and lonely than his heart.

A long time he sat there. It might have been one hour or it might have been six, for all he knew. But at last he raised his head and looked out over the dreary stretch of plain. Drawing a weary sigh he murmured:

"So like what all my life must be! One long barren stretch unbroken by a single ray of happiness!"

Again he dropped his head and was silent. His soul was very heavy.

A minute passed, and then there came to him the soft murmur of voices. He peered cautiously around and saw a couple approaching the knoll from the other side. It was Miss Clyde and Daniels. They were walking close together and were conversing in low and earnest tones.

"Making love," Abe thought, and he shut his teeth tight together.

They came on to the knoll and stopped. Abe would have gone away, but he could not without being seen, and not for the world would he have exposed himself to their gaze just then.

So he sat still and nerved himself to meet whatever might come, and waited.

"They'll be kissing and talking love," he thought, "and I'll have to listen to it and bear it."

For a time, however, neither of them spoke, and then at last, when the silence was broken, Abe gave a start, and, lifting his head, listened eagerly, almost doubting his own senses. It was Daniels who had spoken, and his words were:

"So you refuse absolutely to become my wife?"

"I most certainly do," was her reply, spoken emphatically.

"Then why have you deceived me like this? Why have you not agreed to marry me?"

"I have not deceived you, and I have not agreed to marry you. You have deceived yourself, and, because I did not say I wouldn't marry you, you have taken it for granted I would."

"And by your silence you deceived me. You led me on to think it was all right. Why did you do that?"

"It suited my purpose to let you play your little farce to the end. You took it for granted that I was as much a fool as you were a knave, and I thought it would be cruel to undeceive you. And besides, you know, your thirty days of probation are not out."

"What?" he cried.

"Oh, you know what I mean. You thought I was very ignorant, but I was not. You should have clipped one article from those newspapers you gave me that day. The one announcing that I was a heiress."

"I don't understand!"

"Don't you?"

"No."

"Then how about Sadie's letter? You no doubt understand that."

"Sadie's letter!" he gasped. "Where did you get that?"

"You thought it was buried under all that dirt, didn't you?"

"I did."

"Well, it wasn't. It was found that day and given to me. I have it now."

Daniels waited a moment before he spoke, and then with an oath he said:

"It was that Hostetter. I wish I had killed him."

"And you would," she replied, "if you could have done so. You tried it the best you could then, and also today out there on the prairie."

"And I'd try it again if I had the chance," he cried.

"I have no doubt of it. It seems to be your nature to assassinate people. But do you know that it would be well for you to be going?"

"My six hours are not up."

"No, and those men may not wait for them to be up. Dick is bursting to tell what he knows, and he is liable to tell it any moment. When he does it's all up with you."

"But he won't tell."

"Maybe not. I'd hate to take chances on it, though."

He thought for a moment.

"Well," he said, "I may as well go. There is nothing to hope for here."

"Not a thing," she answered. "You have played your little game and I've played mine. I have understood you all along and now you understand me. You may as well go."

"But what was your object in playing with me like this?"

"I wanted to punish you, and I——"

"Wanted to make Hostetter jealous and bring him to his senses, eh?"

She made no reply, and Abe's heart began to thump tumultuously.

"I know all about it," Daniels went on. "Talking about punishment, I guess I have done something in that line myself. I wrote the letter that separated you two."

"You?" she cried.

"Yes, I. And you still love him?"

She was silent.

"You still love him," he repeated. "You can not deny it."

Abe stood up trembling all over.

"But, he hates you, thank Heaven, and all your life you'll suffer."

Abe was around the knoll like a flash. He towered high and his eyes sparkled.

"It's a lie!" he cried. You——"

And he sprang at Daniels throat like a tiger. At that moment a soft voice spoke.

"Abe," it said.

He stopped, and in an instant his anger was gone. He forgot that Daniels existed. He dropped on his knees at her side and threw his arms about her and kissed her.

"My darling," he murmured. "At last."

"At last," she repeated, nestling close to him with her head on his shoulder.

From across the prairie came the sound of many voices. Dick had told.

CHAPTER XXX.

CONCLUSION.

The cowboys with old Dick at their head, came streaming out across the prairie carrying guns and a rope. Near the knoll they met Abe and Miss Clyde.

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This is just the nicest, funniest Teddy Bear you could possibly imagine, and we are giving it away FREE! It is a large-sized, life-like, genuine imported fuzzy, brown Teddy Bear—ONE OF THE REAL TEDDY BEARS that people have fairly gone crazy over. Shining black eyes, a comical, movable head, and movable arms and legs. You can put Teddy Bear into all sorts of laughable positions. This Teddy Bear stands nearly one-half yard high, and is really a talking bear besides, for when you squeeze him Teddy gives a squeak that makes him funnier than ever. You can get him easily, for we give him for selling only 24 packages of Bluine at 10 cents a package. When sold return our $2.40 and we will send you this full-sized Teddy Bear just as promised. Write today! Address BLUINE MFG. CO., 262 Mill St., Concord Junction, Mass.

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"What does this mean, boys?" the former asked.

"Where is Daniels?" Andy asked in turn.

"He is gone."

"Where?"

"For the East."

The cowboys' faces showed disappointment. Abe turned to Dick and said:

"You have broken your promise."

"I know it," Dick replied, "but I couldn't help. I -I——"

"You were thinking of me?" Miss Clyde questioned.

"Yes, ma'm, I was. I wouldn't reconcile myself to your going away with him."

"That is all right, Dick," Abe said. "She is not going. She never meant to go."

"Never?" Dick cried.

"Certainly not," she replied. "I am sorry you have so poor an opinion of me as to think I would do such a thing."

"But it was our understanding."

"Yes, from him."

"And you went with him——"

"Yes, for a purpose."

"I thought maybe you didn't know him like we did."

"Yes, I did. I knew it all—his first attempt at murder, and everything."

There was a momentary silence, after which old Andy said:

"How long has Daniels been gone?"

"Just a little while," Miss Clyde answered, having no suspicion of the meaning of his question.

Andy looked around at his companions.

"I reckon," he said, "that it ain't too late yit."

"For what?" she asked.

"Why, to catch Daniels and hang him. We can soon run him down on our horses."

"No, you must not do that, boys," Abe interposed. "We promised to let him go, and besides——"

"For my sake you won't," Miss Clyde said pleadingly.

They hesitated, wavered and at last yielded, though it was a bitter sacrifice for them to make.

"If ever a man deserves hangin' he shorely does," Andy observed.

"Yep, shorely," Dick agreed. Presently he added, as if speaking to himself: "And sech a purty tree for the purpose! Must a-growed jest for that. Shame to let it go to waste when we had sech a fine chance to use it. A plumb scandalous shame."

Abe heard, and understood how bitter and deep was old Dick's disappointment. Taking the old man's hand, he shook it warmly, saying:

"I know, Dick, but it is best this way. Let Daniels go. We are rid of him for good and all. It was against me that he showed his malice, and I forgive him. He tried to kill me, but he did more for me than any one else ever did."

"I don't understand," Dick replied.

"No, but soon you will."

Still Dick shook his head doubtfully. He was perplexed.

"I can't see how that comes about," he said. "I can't figger out how a feller can do much of a favor to a man by tryin' to murder him."

Abe smiled, but he held his feelings well in check, and they could see that he was very happy.

"Tomorrow," he replied, "you will understand how it is."

At breakfast next morning Abe was all smiles and affability. Also he was cleanly shaved and neatly dressed. The cowboys were puzzled at all this, and finally Andy Scott made some remark anent the wonderful transformation. To this remark Abe replied:

"It seems only right and proper, Andy, that a man should be happy, and sort of fix up, when he's going to live with an angel."

"Live with an angel!" Andy exclaimed. "What you mean? Whar's any angel you're 'lowin' to live with?"

Abe drew himself up proudly.

"The name of the angel," he announced, "is at present Alice Clyde. But after today it will be Alice Hostetter."

For a moment blank astonishment and intense silence reigned. Then old Andy Scott exclaimed:

"Wal, I'll be dadswitched!"

Then they arose as one man, and solemnly and heartily shook Abe's hand.

The end.

KNOWS HOW

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When a doctor, who has been the victim of the coffee habit, cures himself by leaving off coffee and taking Postum Food Coffee, he knows something about what he is advising in that line.

A good old doctor in Ohio, who had at one time been the victim of the coffee habit, advised a woman to leave off coffee and take on Postum.

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"His suggestions were carried out and the delicious beverage fascinated me, so that I hastened to inform my friend who had rejected Postum. She is now using it regularly, after she found that it could be made to taste good.

"I observed, a short time after starting Postum, a decided change in my nervous system. I could sleep soundly, and my brain was more active. My complexion became clear and rosy, whereas, it had been muddy and spotted before; in fact, all of the abnormal symptoms disappeared and I am now feeling perfectly well.

"Another friend was troubled in much the same manner as I, and she has recovered from her heart and stomach trouble by leaving off coffee and using Postum Food Coffee.

"I know of several others who have had much the same experience. It is only necessary that Postum be well boiled and it wins its own way." "There's a Reason." Read "The Road to Wellville," in pkgs.

JUST WHAT HE DESERVED.

"I don't understand you at all," said Pierce Trevor to his friend Ralph Dewey. "Reveal yourself to me."

"You talk as if I were a conundrum."

"So you are. Now, look here, Dewey, let's have a clear comprehension of the matter. Do you love Alice White?"

"Well—yes—I rather think, on the whole, that I am a little taken with the sparkling brunette."

"A little taken! How very enthusiastic you are. And she, poor child, is more than a little taken with you."

"I flatter myself that you are right."

"Well, then, why don't you ask her to marry you?"

Dewey groaned.

"There it is!" he exclaimed; "you are all in such a hurry. Can't a man admire a girl without being brought to book for it the very next day? I won't be hurried. When I get ready I'll ask Alice to marry me. Are you satisfied, dear boy?"

"Far from it."

"As Miss White is only your wife's cousin, I really don't recognize your right to catechize me."

"Does that mean that I am to mind my own business?"

Ralph laughed.

"Construe it as you please, only pray don't bother me any more."

He threw himself lazily on the grass, flinging his cigar into the very heart of a cluster of wild flowers, and making an impromptu pillow of his arms crossed under his head.

"Sleep, then," said Trevor contemptuously. "I can't afford to lose the brightest hours of a golden day like this."

Our hero had not lain there many minutes before the soft chime of girlish voices sounded through the tiny hum of summer insects and the monotonous murmur of green boughs overhead.

"Girls!" muttered Dewey. "Can't a fellow be clear of 'em anywhere? But they are on the other side of the copse, that's one blessing, and if I keep quiet they'll never discover [illegible]."

They were on the other side of the copse—three bright-faced, merry girls in fluttering raiment.

"It's so delightfully cool here," said Hilda Aymer, a fair young girl.

"And one can talk here, too," said Mary Bell. "At the hotel one is never certain of not being overheard."

Ralph Dewey gave a silent chuckle at this announcement.

Alice White, leaning against the twisted trunk of a veteran tree, devoted her attention to her parasol-handle. She was the prettiest of the three, with deep, liquid eyes, and hair black as jet, while her skin, just touched with a creamy tint, glowed carmine on her cheek.

"Alice, do let me try!" said Hilda. "It will be such a splendid joke, and your complaisant adorer is so long in making up his mind.

But, oh, dear me!—what will Captain Aymer think?"

"He'll be delighted; men always glory in a bit of mischief, and Kent is such a splendid actor."

"Do, Alice!" urged Mary Bell. "It will be just like the theater. Hilda's brother is to pretend to be desperately in love with you, and you are to encourage his attentions until that slow-moving Dewey is brought to the point. I expect to enjoy the progress of the situation intensely."

"But your brother must fully understand the scheme," said Alice hesitatingly.

"Of course—sha'n't I explain it to him myself? There's not a bit of harm in it, and Mr. Dewey certainly needs some stimulus. Now, do consent! Kent will be here this evening, remember!"

"She doesn't forbid it, Hilda," eagerly cried Miss Bell, "and all the world knows that silence gives consent. Come, see how long the shadows are getting."

And soon the three Graces fluttered down the hillside.

Dewey rose to his feet and walked away also.

"My dear little girls," said he, by way of soliloquy, "it's a cleverly concocted plan; but it won't work, and I've no doubt I shall enjoy it as much as Miss Bell proposes to do." And he began to chuckle again, to think how completely he should outgeneral his feminine adversaries. "I'll keep Alice in suspense for another month, just to pay her for that!" he added, within himself. "I like the girl well enough; but, for all that, I won't be hurried into matrimony."

Knowing what he knew, therefore, Ralph was not at all surprised that evening, when he walked into the hotel parlor, to see a stylish young man in the uniform of a captain sitting on the sofa, and devoting himself to his own Alice White.

"Let 'em work," said Mr. Dewey, with a covert smile.

Then he began to play backgammon with a pretty widow.

From beneath her long lashes, Alice watched her lover.

"It doesn't produce any effect at all upon him—the brute!" said Hilda, who had expected to see the delinquent brought to terms forthwith.

"That is because we do not put it on strong enough," said the captain. "Al[illegible]—I may call you Alice?"

"Oh, certainly—it is all in the play," returned Miss White.

"Well, then, Alice, I think we ought to promenade through the halls arm in arm for a while, and if I were to whisper, instead of speaking aloud, I think——"

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Alice laughed and consented, and the whole evening long she and the captain exchanged very commonplace remarks in very confidential whispers, while Mr. Dewey and the widow played serenely.

"I like this game," said Captain Kent to his sister, when Miss White had gone to her room. "She is the prettiest girl I ever saw."

"Oh, but, Kent, you musn't fall in love with her."

"I shall not fall in love with her—there's no danger," said Aymer; "but it's such fun! I'm so much obliged to you for suggesting it!"

Alice cried herself to sleep that night. Dewey didn't seem to care a pin whether she flirted or not.

The next day she went out horse-riding with the captain. Kent sat on his horse like a centaur, and Alice came back rosy as a whole bed of carnations.

"Are you going with us to the falls tomorrow, Alice?" asked Mr. Dewey that evening. "We said something about going together a week or so ago, didn't we?"

Alice was ready with her lesson.

"Did we? I had forgotten. Besides, I promised to go with Captain Aymer."

"With Aymer?"

"Yes."

"Oh, well, all right. I can take Julia [illegible]."

Alice's lip quivered, but Hilda shook her head at her, and she did not call back her lover, as had been her impulse. Captain Aymer proved a most devoted cavalier, and Alice half-reproached herself that she had enjoyed the day so much.

"It is very wrong of me," sighed she to Hilda, her faithful confidante.

"No, it isn't; it's exactly right," responded her chum.

"I—I begin to be afraid he doesn't care much for me."

"He's a brute!" asserted Hilda, "and it would serve him right if you never looked at him again."

So the glowing midsummer swept by, and Mr. Dewey held aloof, hugging himself to think how he was outwitting the conspirators, though an occasional twinge of jealousy now and then upset him.

Presently there was a short outcry among the allied forces. An order had come from the inexorable War Department, and the captain must go to Washington at once.

"The matter was getting serious," thought Ralph. "But just as soon as that confounded puppy gets away I'll make Alice a happy woman. Maybe, though, it would be well to punish her a bit longer."

"Oh, Alice, aren't you sorry?" sobbed Hilda, clinging to her tall brother, whose face was unwontedly grave.

"Yes, Hilda," said Alice. "I am very sorry."

Captain Aymer looked penitratingly into her face. There were real tears sparkling and quivering on her lashes, and the roses had paled from her checks.

"Alice!" he said impetuously, "is it from your heart?"

Alice, silly little creature that she was, began to cry, and Hilda rushed forward, exclaiming:

"Oh, Kent, you promised that——"

"A man isn't responsible for his fate, and I've fallen in love with her," declared the young officer. "Alice, am I to love you in vain? Tell me, my sweetheart."

The girl tried to smile.

"Of—of course, this is part of the program," she faltered.

"By Jove, but it is not!" cried Aymer. "What was jest has become earnest. I love you, Alice. I cannot leave you here to become the bride of that conceited puppy. Tell me that I may hope."

Hilda seized both her friend's hands in a firm grip.

"She loves you, Kent—she loves you! I see it in her eyes!" she cried exultantly.

"Stand aside, sister mine," said Aymer. "I have the first right here. She is mine now."

And tenderly he folded her to his heart.

Yes; it was true that the little morsel of acting had become strong, lifelong reality. Kent and Alice had played at lovers until Love, the sly rogue, crept into both their hearts with almost unperceived footsteps.

"Are you unhappy, Alice?" asked the young soldier, when all was settled, and his sister had run off to tell Mary Bell, as a great secret, how the stratagem had ended.

"Oh, Kent," whispered the girl, "I never before knew what true happiness was."

Captain Aymer must have been unreasonable indeed not to be satisfied with the answer. He departed, carrying with him the loving heart of Alice White.

Ralph Dewey contemplated the departure of Hilda's brother with no small degree of satisfaction.

"Now's my chance," he thought. "I think, on the whole, I'll not keep her in suspense any longer, poor child! I only wanted to let them see that I wasn't to be coerced."

Mr. Dewey proposed accordingly [illegible] form that very day.

"I'm very sorry, Mr. Dewey," said Alice, looking provokingly lovely, "but—but I'm already engaged."

"Engaged!"

"Yes, to Captain Aymer."

"No, Alice," said Ralph argumentatively, "what's the use of keeping up this farce any longer? Of course I know it is all a stratagem."

"It is not," said Alice indignantly. "I love him, and he loves me—and behold my engagement ring."

She held up her finger as she spoke, whereon a solitary diamond glittered.

So Mr. Dewey found himself outmaneuvered after all, and accordingly retreated in as good order as possible, while Pierce Trevor, Hilda, Miss Bell and all the rest returned a unanimous verdict of "Just what he deserved, exactly."

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All eagerness, Charley wanted to know everything, but Eddy whispered: "It isn't safe to speak of a matter of this kind in a public street. Where can we go to talk privately?"

"Why, let us step into this cafe and have a drink and a chat."

"Good enough." Two whiskies were ordered and disposed of.

"How much?" asked Charley.

"Twenty-five cents," said the bartender.

Having cast down his quarter, Charley said to his friend, "Now how about that investment?"

"You've already made it, and have the profits in your pocket."

"What do you mean?"

"Well, you always drink alone at 15 cents a drink, two for 30 cents. You and I have just had two drinks for a quarter, therefore by investing 25 cents you have saved a nickel. Good morning."

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Said She—All right. I'll take an ice cream soda to begin with.

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CHAPTER I.

Night was coming down on the Colorado peaks of the great Rocky Mountains. High on the lofty summits still lingered the fiery glow of the setting sun, but down in the deep gorges the dark shadows of night were fast gathering.

A dreary waste of foothills, broken here and there by some jagged point rising high above the rolling mesa, stretched away to meet the mighty peaks beyond, and over it all, brooded the silence of death.

As far as the eye could reach there was no sign of life, save where a belated mountain vulture, a mere speck against the darkening sky, swam in the wake of the setting sun.

Presently the sharp incessant staccato of pounding hoofs came like the roll of a drum from the deep canyon, and then a horseman came into view, riding at a swinging gallop along the winding trail.

He was a youth of some eighteen years. His handsome face was bronzed by exposure to the sun and wind, and there was that about his garb and easy grace with which he guided his horse along the dangerous trail that bespoke one long accustomed to the wild life of the mountains.

As he rounded a sharp turn in the narrow trail, a voice coming from a mass of boulders to the left and in front, broke sharply through the silence.

"Halt, and hands up!"

Dan Danford—for such was the youth's name—had lived too long in that region not to know the full import of such a command and the dire calamity that invariably followed any hesitation to obey. So he put up his hands and ran his eyes in the direction from whence the voice had proceeded.

To his surprise no one appeared in sight. Whoever the road agent might be, he was still concealed by the mass of boulders that reared its ramparts above the trail.

"Well, if you are going to do any business, come and do it!" said the youth coolly.

"Put down that right hand," came the voice from the roadside, and in wonderment Dan obeyed.

"Now slip your hand into that saddle pocket just back of your right leg," came the order, "and don't you try to make any gun play, for I've got you covered."

Still amazed, Dan obeyed.

"Now, what do you find in there?"

"Nothing but a bottle of brandy," replied Dan.

"Good!" cried the voice in ambush. "Pass it out 'fore I bore you through!"

Then the burly form of a man came suddenly from a thicket, a broad grin on his face.

"Why, you blamed old vagabond!" cried Dan, but the other snatched the bottle before he could say more and began taking a long pull.

"Blame your hide!" went on Dan. "I ought to wing you for playing such a trick on me."

"Don't blame my hide," pleaded the stranger, taking a long breath and smacking his lips, "but just put it down against my appetite."

The look of vexation that clouded the youth's face gradually softened and he leaned back in his saddle and laughed softly.

"Jim Dorsey," he said, "you infernal old vagabond, will you never have a serious moment?"

"Serious? I was never more serious in my life. I tell you, Dan, it is a serious business to want a drink right bad when you're forty miles from a bar."

"Do cut that out, Jim. I know better than to think you have become such a toper as that."

"Do you? Well, have it your own way. Here's your bottle. I haven't quite emptied it. Now I can talk business with you. I have been expecting you for a week, and wondering all the time what the Sam Hill was keeping you in Denver."

"Business, Jim, business that could not be disposed of any sooner."

"What luck?"

"All that I could wish, Jim."

"And you found the men you were looking for?"

"One of them—Bennett Burcell."

"Did you get a settlement out of him?"

Dan threw his head back and laughed, a sort of mirthless laugh, that jarred strangely on Jim Dorsey's ears.

"Let's not talk about that now," said the youth, a strange light burning in his eyes. "Can you give me something to eat?"

"Sure thing," replied Jim. "Come with me to the cabin and we'll have a bite."

He stooped down and took a tin bucket from a bunch of grass, and dipping it into a spring that gushed from under the towering cliff, led the way up the trail.

Turning an abrupt angle in the trail, they came to the border of an open glen, shut in by towering walls of rock that rose with dark and gloomy aspect against the darkening sky.

In the center of the little cove stood a rude log cabin, the yellow light from its open door cutting sharply through the surrounding gloom.

Dan dismounted, and removing the saddle and picketing his horse, he followed Jim Dorsey into the cabin.

The fragrant odor of steaming coffee filled the air, and the savory smell of roast venison gave him a pleasant greeting.

"Get your feet under the table," said Jim as he poured the steaming coffee into the tin cups, and Dan obeyed.

He ate in silence, and not till the meal was finished and Jim had lighted his pipe, was there a word spoken.

Jim Dorsey sat on a stool, his back against the cabin wall, puffing lazily at his pipe.

"Dan," said Jim, after a brief silence, "you are a strange boy."

"Am I? Well, I have gone through enough in the last few months to make one a little queer."

"I didn't say you were queer," corrected Jim, "but it does seem as if there was something on your mind. If you are in any trouble, don't hesitate to call on me if I can help you. There never was a time when Jim Dorsey wasn't ready to fight for a friend."

"I know that all right," nodded the youth. "I have found you of the true blue, Jim, and I'm not going to forget it. Didn't you find me in the bord[illegible] the Arizona des[illegible] helpless and almost [illegible] and take me to your cabin and nurse me as if I were your own brother? And haven't you always kept watch over me ever since our first meeting and showed me such friendship as one rarely finds?"

Jim made a quick gesture of protest.

"I haven't done anything that any human creature wouldn't have done," he said, "and then I liked you from the first, and I haven't been contented unless you were with me."

"I guess our attachment has been mutual," smiled Dan, "and when I told you that I was going to make you a rich man, you only laughed and thought it was part of the insanity of the desert that was upon me still."

A troubled look came over Jim Dorsey's face.

"Don't speak of that, Dan," he implored. "You are stout and well now, and I pray that you will remain so, but if you keep hanging onto that illusion I shall not know what to think."

Dan smiled a quiet smile.

"Well, to please you, I won't mention it again for a little spell, not till I have told you the whole story and convinced you that it is not an hallucination."

"Maybe I am wrong," said Jim, "and maybe it isn't my place to butt in, but I tell you, my boy, it would please me to have you cut this whole business out. I have been through it all. I know what it is to be lured by the glitter of gold—to feel the hideous nightmare on my senses day and night, while it drove me like a slave into the pitiless desert in a mad quest for it. I have felt the burning, the torturing thirst upon me; I have seen my companions fall at my side, their black tongues protruding from their parched lips, and yet I have staggered on, in the vain hope that I would discover the El Dorado which some prospector, as mad as I, had pictured. I have been through it all; I know its madness, but I thank God I am now free—free from the madness of gold, and content to do any work that falls to my hands, honest, healthful toil that is not tinctured with that fever that drives men insane."

For some minutes there was silence in the cabin. Dan Danford was the first to speak.

"I know how you feel," he said, "and I am not going to argue with you. Nor am I going to ask you to go with me into the desert in search of a mountain of gold. But I am going to tell you my story, for the time has now come for me to do so."

CHAPTER II.

DAN DANFORD'S STORY.

"When I left you here and went to Denver more than a month ago," went on Dan, "I told you I was going in search of a man who had done my father and me a great wrong. But that was not my only mission in the city. To find Bennett Purcell was only a part of my object in going to Denver. I tell you, Jim, I have never told you the half of that man's cursedness. It hurts me to talk about it, but it is part of my story and I must tell it all.

"Bennett Purcell is a rich man. He is honored and respected, and if one dared to hint that under his oily manner and hypocritical smile there was a soul as black as night, those who think they know him would laugh in your face. Yet he is a devil, if there ever was one who wore human shape.

"When my mother died five years ago, my father placed me in a school and went West. A few months later he returned to St. Louis and sold all his property there, and with a capital of more than a hundred thousand dollars, went to Mexico to engage in the cattle raising business. In Chihuahua he met Bennett Purcell, who was one of the great Mexican cattle kings. He and my father became friends. He gave glowing accounts of the immense profits of the business of grazing in the rich plains and valleys of Chihuahua, and induced my father to invest in the business.

"For the next few years my father prospered. He gained the confidence of the high government officials, and there was a close friendship between him and the governor. It was about this time that Purcell set to work to accomplish my father's ruin. What moved him to do so I am unable to say, but from all I can gather it was jealousy of my father's growing power and fast accumulating wealth.

"At that time there was much internal dissension in the Mexican republic, and warring factions were struggling for supremacy. All foreigners were looked upon with suspicion, and if one was suspected of sympathizing with either of the opposing factions, he was immediately placed in the category of "filibusters" and if he was not assassinated, he was locked in a Mexican dungeon where he might remain for years without trial.

"It was this condition of affairs that made it easy for Bennett Purcell to carry out his devilish plans. With the aid of a number of hired Mexican tools, who was ready to do anything for money, he readily trumped up charges against my father, who was thrown into prison. While lying there, waiting for the tardy justice of Mexican authority to set him free, Purcell was not idle.

"A band of Mexican bandits, in the employ of Purcell, plundered my father's ranch, drove his herds of cattle into remote territory or across the border into Arizona, where they were disposed of and the proceeds divided between employer and his hired bandits.

"All this time I had heard not a word from my father. His long silence gave me great alarm, and at last I resolved to go to Chihuahua in search of him.

"When I reached my father's ranch I found it deserted by all save a few faithful herders. The herds had been driven away by the plundering hirelings of Purcell, or confiscated by the Mexican authorities, and my father was a prisoner in the dungeon at San Vincente.

"I learned all this from one faithful soul who still remained at the ranch house, a strange old man who was known as Axayacatzin, the Aztec. He told me the story of the wrongs that had been done my father, as far as he was able, but cautioned me to be on my guard lest I should suffer the same fate that had been meted out to my father.

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"I went to San Vincente, but I was refused admittance to my father's prison, and it was only after days of delay and after I had bribed one of the guards that I was allowed to see him.

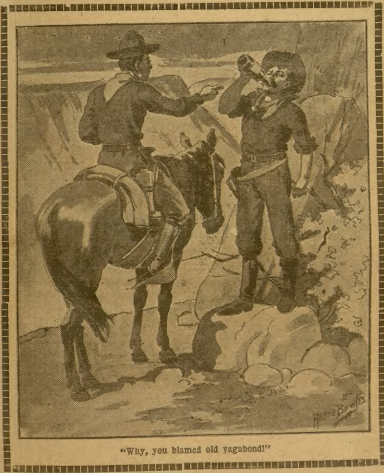
"It was a sad meeting. I found my father broken in health and spirit, and he wept like a child when he saw me. I was allowed to remain but an hour with him, and he told me as briefly as he could of all the wrongs that had been done him. When I tried to cheer him with promises to bring the matter before the American consulate he shook his head mournfully. 'If you make any move in that direction,' he said, 'you will not be allowed to escape from the country alive. Bennett Purcell is all powerful now, and his word is law.'

"At the end of that precious hour I was conducted from the prison, and I never saw my father again. He died in prison a week later, and was buried before I knew of it. All this time spies had been on my track, and I was thrown into the same prison from which the body of my father had been carried a few days before.

"How long I lay in that loathsome prison I can never tell. I was refused any communication with the outer world. It all seems like a hideous dream to me now, and I cannot think of it without a shudder.

"One night I was aroused from a fitful slumber by the voice of some one in my cell. It was the voice of Axayacatzin, the Aztec, and in a low tone he bade me keep silent. My heart gave a great bound, for I knew he was my friend. He took me by the arm, and in silence led me from my cell and from the prison. In the court without the guard lay as if dead, and not till we were far away from the town did the old Aztec tell me how he had accomplished my liberation.

"For weeks he had remained in San Vincente, watching and waiting for an opportunity to rescue me. He took lodgings in the same building where one of the guards of the prison stayed, made his acquaintance, drank with him, and paved the way to come to my rescue.



"Why, you blamed old vagabond!"

"He got the guard to drink with him on several occasions, and when the proper time came he put a drug in the liquor and put the guard to sleep while he took the keys and liberated me.

"We traveled all night and most of the next day, going westward into the mountains. Then we rested a few hours and resumed our journey. By the next day we reached a wild region and took refuge in a cave, where we remained for a week, living on a quantity of dried beef and crackers the Aztec had brought.

"I found Axayacatzin to be a curious creature. It was said that he was really an Aztec, though his claims to being such was viewed by some as the vagaries of an old man. Let that be as it may, I have never met a man just like him, and he was as different from the Mexicans as any one could well imagine. His friendship for my father and I was steadfast and true, though he was not demonstrative.

"After leaving the cavern we turned our faces toward the north, and traveling by night, we pushed rapidly on toward the Arizona line.

"But we had not gone far when, in passing a narrow trail that skirted the edge of a dangerous precipice, the Aztec slipped, lost his footing and fell into a deep chasm. When I at last made the dangerous descent and stood at his side I quickly saw that his injuries were mortal.

"It was a terrible shock to me. I felt that he had given his life for me, and as I knelt by his side the tears gushed into my eyes and blinded me.

"He saw my grief and pressed my hand gently. 'Do not grieve for me,' he implored. 'My time has come and I am ready to go. I am one of the last of my race, if not the last, and it is fitting that I should fall here where my forefathers suffered and died at the hands of the cruel Spaniards, four hundred years ago.'

"He paused and I brought him some water from a little stream in the canyon and pressed it to his lips. He drank a few swallows, and for a time he lay as if already dead.

"When he again spoke it was evident that he had but a few minutes to live. 'My son,' he said, 'the hope of my race has been that some time the country from which the Spaniards drove us in the ages long ago might be restored to us, and that we might bring vengeance upon the nation of people who drove us from our homes and destroyed our race as the fire the chaff. But it was not to be. The Great Builder over all gives it not to man to be the judge of the things of this world, and it is He who will even it up in the end. Ages ago, when my people were slaughtered at Chapultepec, and what remained were driven to the north by the merciless sword of Spain, they made their way into Chihuahua, where, for a time, they found peace. Here, within sight of this spot they built their homes. The treasure, which was the wealth of the Astecs, and which they had guarded from the hands of the plundering Spaniards, was gathered together and hidden deep in the Mountain of the Sun, which you can see to the west.

"He paused for a moment, and turned his eyes toward the mountain whose scarred and blackened summit stood dark against the sky.

"And then he went on, telling me a marvelous story of a treasure there, one that at first filled me with silent wonderment, and in the end convinced me that he was mad—and that his strange story was but the workings of a feverish brain."

CHAPTER III.

Jim Dorsey, leaning back against the wall of the cabin, listened with rapt attention to the strange story which Dan Danford was telling.

"Of course the old Aztec was crazy," remarked Jim, as Dan paused in his narration. "We find lots of his kind, but we never find the end of the rainbow they have been looking for, with its pot of gold."

"Of course I thought as you do," went on Dan, "for the story was one that might challenge the belief of the most credulous. Yet there was that about the manner and words of the old man that told me that he was not mad, and that he fully believed what he was saying.

"And I became more and more impressed with his earnestness as he went on with his story. Some where in the South, he said, the ancient Aztecs, before their advent into Mexico, had discovered in the crater of a great volcano, an immense cavity filled with diamonds, the like of which the world had never seen, and these they had brought with them to the North. Through all their vicissitudes they had kept them concealed from the plundering hosts of Spain, only to leave them at last in the deep recesses of the heart of the mountain. With his last breath, the old Aztec consigned the treasure to me, imploring me to go to the subteranean treasure house and remove the treasure that it might not fall into the hands of the enemies of his vanished race.

"When he was dead I buried him in a cleft of rock, heaping a great pile of stones over his body, and raising a shaft of rude granite over the spot, I carved this inscription with my knife:

'Axayacatzin II,

A King, Whose Only Kingdom Was the Hearts of Men.'

"I felt a deep sense of loneliness and bereavement as I turned away from the spot and set my face toward the grim mountain of the Sun.

"Had the old Aztec been insane? Was all he had told me merely the effect of an hallucination? Despite all my doubts, there was something about the strange story he had told that impressed me strangely. But no matter what the result should be, I would carry out the wishes of my dead friend.

"It was almost dark when I reached the summit of the mountain though the peaks to the west were still red with the fiery rays of the setting sun.

"As I cast about me, I perceived a great yawning abyss on the very summit of the mountain, the crater of an extinct volcano whose last flaming breath had probably issued from the subterranean depths ages before. I cut a number of resinous branches from the scraggy brush that grew on the mountain side, and using these for torches, I began carefully to make the descent.

"It was a dangerous undertaking, and after hours of toil I reached a more sure footing. The directions given me by Axyacatzin, and his description of the place, tallied in every respect with what I saw And this nerved me to push forward.

"How far I descended I can never tell. At last I came to a great chamber, and as the light of my flaring torch cast its rays over the interior, I stood stock still, my heart almost in my mouth. What I saw confirmed all the old Aztec had told, for there were huge heaps of vessels of gold and silver, but to these I gave little attention. In a corner of the chamber, in a cedar box which was crumbling with decay, was a great heap of diamonds, the like of which the world had never seen. I stooped over them, scooping them in my hands in a sort of mad ecstacy. There was that peculiar 'soapy' feeling that distinguish the diamond from all other crystals, but still my mind was beset by a sudden fear that they were not what they seemed. Were they diamonds? My senses were in a mad whirl, and for a time I forgot everything else.

"How long I sat there, taking them in my hands and holding them in the rays of the torch, I never knew. The awful silence of the place, the dreadful darkness about me, all conspired to fill me with a queer sense of loneliness and apprehension.

"I am not superstitious, but I tell you, Jim, that out of the darkness about me I fancied I could see strange faces peering at me, and skeleton hands beckoning from the gloomy clefts of the rocks.

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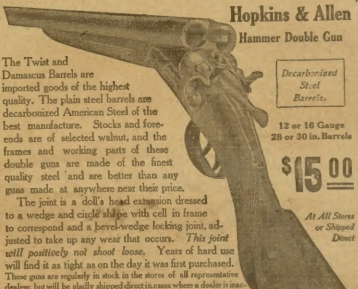

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"It was the sudden sense of fear that roused me, and with this came the desire to get out of the grewsome place as quickly as possible. I took off my coat, and making a bag of it, placed therein the stones from the old chest. Then fastening the bag across my shoulders, I took up the torch and began the ascent.

"When I at last reached the top of the crater and stood again in the outer world under the stars, I breathed a breath of thankfulness. I spent the night at the base of the mountain, and at the first streaks of dawn, was on my way to the north.

"I soon came to the shanty of a Mexican herder, and there I procured a fairly good breakfast. From him I procured a small haversack, into which I placed the stones I had brought from the mountain, and again set out on my journey.

"I traveled on and on, avoiding ranches, and any signs of human habitation. The country was strange to me, and I never knew when I crossed the Mexican border. So fearful was I of pursuit, that I traveled through the wildest sections of country, and so pushed on day after day.

"There is little more to tell of my jounrey. How you found me wandering in the Arizona desert, half-mad with thirst, you already know. And when I tried to tell you of the treasure that I carried, you merely laughed at the stones and declared I was mad."

Jim Dorsey puffed at his pipe in silence for some time before he spoke.

"Do you aim to tell me," he ventured at length, "that the stuff you showed me in the haversack was anything else but worthless crystals?"

A curious smile came over the youth's face.

"Jim," he said, "in that haversack was the wealth of Croesus, and the little stones you thought worthless, they were worth millions—millions!"

Jim shook his head sadly.

"There you are again," he nodded. "For heaven's sake, Dan, don't distress me by such ravings."

"If I am mad," said Dan, with a quiet smile, "then there are a great many mad people in the world. When I parted with you a little more than a month ago I had barely a hundred dollars in my pocket, and that was every cent I had in the world, a sum I had saved from the allowance given my by my father while at school, and now I have all I ever expect to want, and more."

As he spoke he drew a roll of bills from his pocket, and selecting two from the roll tossed them to Jim.

"Put these in your pocket for pin money," he said, "and when you want more you have only to say the word."

Jim Dorsey picked up the bills and looked at them in a dazed sort of way.

They were two one-thousand dollar bills.

CHAPTER IV.

As Jim Dorsey gazed at the bills in his hand his jaw fell and he sat with eyes riveted on them as if he had been turned to stone.

"In the name of Heaven, Dan, where did you get these?" he gasped, as soon as he could find voice.

"From the worthless stones I had in that sack," laughed Dan.

Jim could only stare in wonderment.

It was several moments before he spoke.

"Dan," he cried, "are—are you playing one of your jokes on me?"

"You ought to know better," asserted Dan.

Jim scratched his head for a moment in perplexity, and then rising, he seized the youth's hand.

"Dan," he cried, "you are a strange boy, a wonder to me, and I will never doubt anything you tell me again. If you tell me this canyon is lined with gold, I'll believe you."

"But I'm not going to do that," laughed Dan. "And now to business. I want you to go with me to New York."

"To New York?" gasped Jim.

"Exactly."

"I'll go with you to the end of the world," asserted Jim.

"Very well. Then we'll be off in the morning."

"Great guns!" ejaculated Jim, turning his gaze again toward the two bills in his hand. "I can hardly believe my eyes! I say, Dan, just kick me to see if I'm asleep and dreaming!"

"Jim," replied Dan, "there have been many times in the last month when I thought pretty much as you do, and even now I can hardly realize that this whole business is not a dream. When I parted from you here and went to Denver, it was not my purpose to go further East, for I still had doubts as to the value of the stones I carried. I took a small one and showed it to a jeweler in Denver, and when he examined it and offered me eight hundred dollars for it, I then began to realize the truth. I accepted his offer, and the next morning I went to the station and bought a ticket for New York."

"And you have been in New York since you left?" cried Jim in amazement.

"Yes, for I had a double purpose in going. I had learned that Bennett Purcell would start for there in a day or two, and I wanted to keep track of him. And then I wanted to go there to negotiate the sale of the diamonds, or a part of them.

"The first thing I did after landing in New York was to hire a saftey deposit vault in which I placed the stones, only keeping out a few of the smaller ones. These I took to different jewelers of the city. I led them to believe I was just from South Africa, and had brought the ones I had direct from the Vaal River. Inside of three days I had sold sixty thousand dollars worth, and so I stopped at that. When I thought of the amount I had received for those I sold, and considered what the others would bring. I tell you, Jim, I was appalled at the result. It actually made me afraid I'd knock the whole bottom out of the diamond market."

"By the powers! but this is wonderful!" cried Jim, rubbing his hands together with delight. "But what are we to do in New York?"

"We shall see about that when we get there," said Dan. "I have a little business to transact, and I'll need you to help me out with my plans. When the old Aztec gave me the secret of the hidden treasure, I made a vow that if it proved to be what the old man represented, I would devote it to bringing revenge on Bennett Purcell for his inhuman treatment of my father, and for his hounding of me which indirectly caused the death of Axayacatzin, my friend and benefactor."

Jim stretched out his powerful arms with a gesture of approval.

"If you want anything done to him, just give me a chance for one good lick at him," he breathed. "I think I can put him to sleep in a half a round."

"No doubt about it," laughed Dan, "but that is not the way we are going to deal with Bennett Purcell. That sort of fellow don't care for a good licking. There is a surer way of reaching him, and that is to strike him as he has struck others, and Bennett Purcell will rue the day he ever raised his hand against my father. I have sworn to make him do this, and I shall keep my oath."

And that night, lying on his rude couch in the mountain cabin, Dan Danford slept the sleep of youth and health, while Bennett Purcell, two thousand miles away, sat in his sumptuous apartments at the Astoria in New York, sipping his costly wines and entertaining his friends with stories of the far away West, unmindful of what was shortly to come.

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Old Sam had been for several days patiently sitting on the bank of the Rappahannock River, near the dam, holding his shotgun in hand.

Finally he attracted the attention of a passerby, who said: "Well, Uncle Sam, are you looking for something to do?"

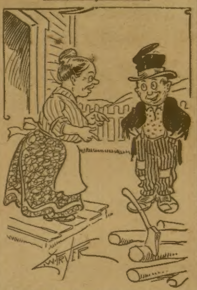
"No, sah," answered Sam; "I's gettin' paid fo' what I's doin'."

"Indeed!" answered the stranger. "And what may that be?"

"Shootin' de muskrats dat am underminin' de dam," answered Sam.

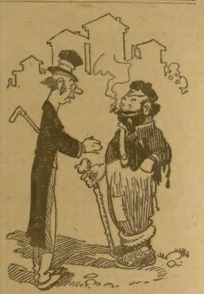
"Well, there goes one now," exclaimed the stranger excitedly. "Why don't you shoot?"

"S'pose I wants to lose my job, sah?" answered Sam, complacently.



Mrs. Oatcake—Would you chop some wood for your dinner?

Gentle Junkins—No, mum! But as you make so kind an offer I really would cut some pie.



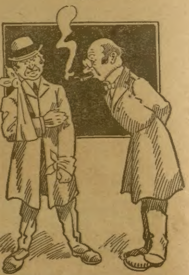
Shabby Shakespeare—So you came East in a palace car, me lord? Were your fellow passengers attentive?

Nosole Nero—Exceedingly. One of them tried to scratch his ear with his foot and came very near tossing me through the door.

Shabby Shakespeare—Great Homer! Are you sure it was a palace care you came in?

Nosole Nero—Sure! A palace stable car.

Awful.



The Faith Healer—When you told me yesterday that you had rheumatism in your arm, I told you it was only in your mind. Did you get it out of your mind?

The Mere Man—Yes; it's in both arms, now.

Something Wrong.

The lad timidly entered the office of the old broker.

"Well, my boy," said the broker, wheeling in his chair. "I suppose you have come to apply for a position as office boy?"

"Y-yes, sir," replied the lad, twitching his hat nervously.

"Mm! How many grandmothers have you?"

"None, sir. Both are dead."

"Well, how often do you get the mumps in the baseball season?"

"Never, sir. I only have the mumps in winter."

"Strange. Then what excuse do you make up when you wish to take an afternoon off to see a ball game?"

"None at all, sir. I don't like baseball, and I have never been to a game in my life."

The old broker gave a low whistle.

"My lad," he exclaimed, "any American boy who doesn't like baseball must be a freak. You'd better go in a dime museum."

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E'S UNREASON.

the path, with fragrance laden all the air, there went a maiden
And a youth walked there beside her—youth a girl might well adore,
And as they went, slowly walking, heads together, lowly talking,
He declared that he had never, never, never loved before;
And she knew his declaration, made with calm deliberation,
Without fear or trepidation—was a fib, and nothing more.

As their voices low, were blending, and their heads together bending,
Love a keener zest was lending—gliding all the landscape o'er;
And so shyly then he kissed her, for what mortal could resist her?
And she blushed and said she never, never had been kissed before;
And he made no contradiction, but he knew her blushing diction,
Of unkissedness was a fiction—was a fib, and nothing more.

But, her eyelids shyly drooped—O! the wiles and ways of Cupid—
Though he was not much more stupid, pray, than either me or you,
Were so wet, like jewels grieving, that they could not be deceiving,
And he found himself believing what he knew could not be true;
And though firm was her conviction of the element of fiction
In his all love-laden diction—yet she did not say him no,
For while reason kept resisting what he said; her eyes were misting,
And her heart kept on insisting that each word of it was so.

WHEN REUBEN AWOKE.

BY WM. R. EYSTER.

At the cry of fire Reuben awoke. He dressed himself calmly, not forgetting to make sure of his few papers and small stock of money, and quietly opened the door.

He was up near the roof of the hotel. Perhaps the house was not first-class in all its appointments, but Reuben had paid small attention to that when he wandered in the previous evening. For that matter he did not look first-class himself.

As he gazed a lurid wave of smoke, followed by a sheet of flame, burst out from the elevator shaft. Beyond these he could no longer see at the end of the hall the red light which marked the fire escape, now, utterly beyond reach.

Near the elevator a door opened and a dimly seen woman darted toward and then swiftly passed him, drifting away through the smoke like the shadow of a fleeing ghost. As there was neither scream nor wringing of hands, it seemed likely that she had hope and an objective point; wherefore, without hesitation Reuben followed.

Such haste as they made was altogether too tardy. When the stairway at the rear was reached, the flames were again ahead, bursting up the open well with a snap and a flare, striking the woman's face and breast and flinging her back, shrivelled and senseless, into Reuben's arms. As she came, however, he caught her and darted on upward, in some way winning his way to the roof, where, the door being shut behind them, they could be, for a little, clear of smoke and fire.

The woman in his arms had been very still—so still that suddenly the man thrilled to the bone. Such waves of flame as had struck at the stairway might well be certain as a thunderbolt. Yet, here was no time for ministry, no space for regrets. Turning away his face he gently would have lowered her to the roof that he might have better chance to obtain for both his bearings. At that moment she, gasping, clenched his neck tightly with the arm whic hung across his shoulder, and hoarsely whispered:

"Wait, Reuben ! Do not leave me yet. I have something to say."

One after another, the words came sobbingly and between gasps. He heard, first with stun and shock, then with excitement.

"My God!" he exclaimed. "It is Aida!"

"Yes, and there is no way out. Don't leave me, Reuben, for both must die and you might never come back."

Reuben never noticed the wording of the appeal. "Lord, Aida!" he chokingly uttered; "you don't suppose I could leave you here?"

"No, Reuben, you would not leave any one here—not even me."

"But—but—there never was a time I would not have left all the world for you."

"Yet, you thought I had left you for all the world. I did not, Reuben; I did not. You were a failure, and I felt that you would be, again and again, until you could care for something else, something more important than a woman. You cared too much for our little world, you see, and not enough for the big, real one, so I pushed you out and then went away, thinking I could do something for myself."

"You did do something, Aida. When you wrote that letter you broke my heart."

"You poor old man! I didn't mean that. I'm sorry. But if I had not written roughly, and that the going was for good and all, you would have been throwing up your hand and coming back, losing all the little chance you had. And so, dear, being wild I wrote and went away—and have done none of the things I dreamed of, either for myself or you. Now you have come back and we are going to die. If you don't mind it, dear, I am not sure but what it is best, since we go together."

"Perhaps, perhaps," he answered absently. "What were you doing here?"

"Doing? Oh, I worked in the hotel. You see, when I came close to the world I found it harder than I thought, and knew better how it had been with you."

She spoke very quietly, and for a moment Reuben was silent. When the woman, fearing that she had hurt beyond remedy, lifted toward him her pinched and pallid face, he pressed his lips suddenly down on hers.

"I think I understand, now," he said. I never did before. I was fool enough to think there was some one else. Come, sweetheart."

He smiled as he spoke, and again was carrying her in his arms. Once over his shoulder he looked back at the trap, seeing how the smoke was showing there and understanding how soon the flame would follow. The roof itself shivered as it swayed, and he walked over a way which scarcely muffled the roar of a death which was very near. On three sides of the building tongues of fire began to show out of the glare, swinging up over the edges of the roof. Only at the end toward which he made his way was the air at all clear.

With one arm he held the woman, with the other he clung to a chimney and drawing a long breath bent over and looked downward.

From the windows on the upper floor fire was bursting—but below, two stories, lay the flat roof of the annex, across which men were hurrying with the ladders just drawn up from the depths below.

—

When they reached the ground the woman drew herself away from her husband's arms, steadying herself against the ladder, while she looked dazedly into his face. He caught her again around the waist:

"We meant what we said up there!" was his eager whisper. "When one comes face to face with death he can see the truth. Fool that I was, I might have known you were truest of the true. And, Aida, there—it seemed too small a thing to tell you then. This time, it was not a failure. I am a world better than I look. Come. We'll find a place where I can tell you about the million. Sweetheart, the nightmare has ended and we're both awake.

Got His Shave.

He walked into the hotel barber shop with a firm tread and gave his coat and hat to the porter with an air which indicated plainly that he was accustomed to being waited upon and having his own way. Removing his collar, he got into a barber's chair.

"Cold today," hazarded the knight of the scissors.

"Just a minute," said the customer, sitting up in the chair. "I want a shave. Not a shave with trimmings, but just a plain shave. I don't want a hair trim, although my hair may look to you as though it needed trimming. I don't want a face massage. I know that a face massage would make the blood circulate and give me a good complexion. But I don't want one.

"I don't want a hair singe. The ends of my hair are probably splitting, and I know that if I had it singed my hair would gain strength and luster. But I'll try to worry along without a hair singe. And I may as well tell you that I don't care for a tonic rub. I'll probably be bald within a year as the result of neglecting this important feature of the proper care of hair, but I'm willing to take chances on that. You may think my hair is turning gray, but if it is I don't care and there is nothing in the way of a guaranteed stain which interests me a bit.

"What I want is a shave. If you will call the boy I'll also have my shoes shined. There will be a 10-cent tip in the job for you, and I'll give the boy an extra nickel if he does a good job. If you understand just what I want you might as well go ahead."

He got his shave.

FREE---6 STYLISH PATTERNS---FREE

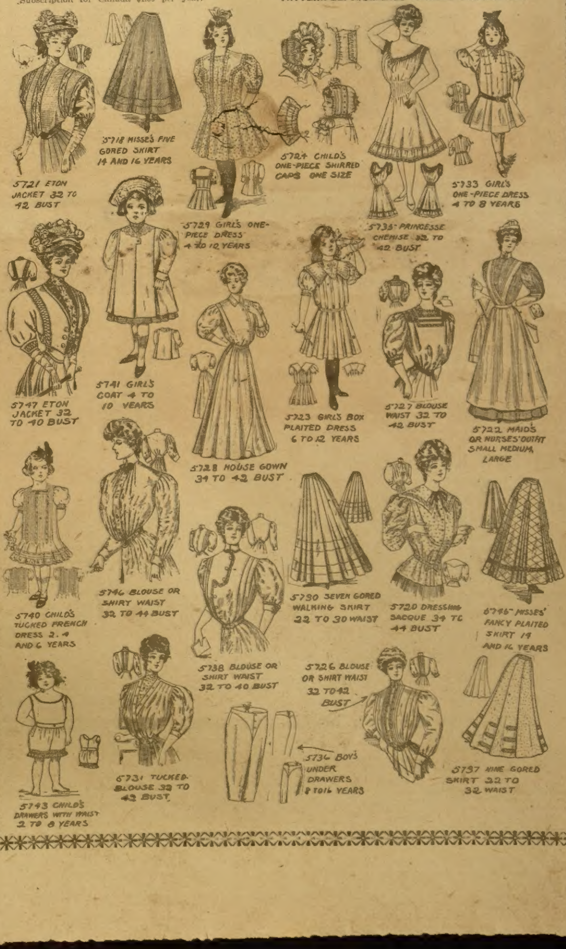
We will send any six of these fashionable, up-to-date patterns ABSOLUTELY FREE with one year's subscription to THE CHICAGO LEDGER. These patterns are from the latest Paris designs. They are best for the home dressmaker, being simple and economical.

One year's subscription to the LEDGER costs only one dollar. You get this fine family story paper every week for a year for the dollar, and you get six of these elegant patterns FREE, by subscribing now.

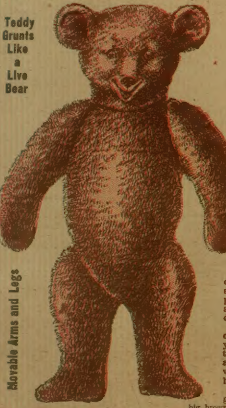
Select any six patterns—send the number and size of each, with one dollar to

Subscription for Canada $1.50 per year.

PATTERN DEPT., CHICAGO LEDGER CHICAGO ILL.


5721 ETON JACKET 32 TO 42 BUST
5718 MISSES FIVE GORED SKIRT 14 AND 16 YEARS
5724 CHILD'S ONE-PIECE SHIRRED CAPS ONE SIZE
5733 GIRLS ONE-PIECE DRESS 4 TO 8 YEARS
5729 GIRLS ONE-PIECE DRESS 4 TO 12 YEARS
5735 PRINCESSE CHEMISE 32 TO 42 BUST
5747 ETON JACKET 32 TO 40 BUST
5741 GIRLS COAT 4 TO 10 YEARS
5723 GIRLS BOX PLAITED DRESS 6 TO 12 YEARS
5727 BLOUSE WAIST 32 TO 42 BUST
5722 MAIDS OR NURSES' OUTFIT SMALL MEDIUM LARGE
5728 HOUSE GOWN 34 TO 42 BUST
5740 CHILD'S TUCKED FRENCH DRESS 2, 4 AND 6 YEARS
5746 BLOUSE OR SHIRT WAIST 32 TO 44 BUST
5730 SEVEN GORED WALKING SKIRT 22 TO 30 WAIST
5720 DRESSING SACQUE 34 TO 44 BUST
5745 MISSES' FANCY PLAITED SKIRT 14 AND 16 YEARS
5738 BLOUSE OR SHIRT WAIST 32 TO 40 BUST
5726 BLOUSE OR SHIRT WAIST 32 TO 42 BUST
5736 BOYS UNDER DRAWERS 8 TO 16 YEARS
5731 TUCKED BLOUSE 32 TO 42 BUST
5743 CHILD'S DRAWERS WITH WAIST 2 TO 8 YEARS
5737 NINE GORED SKIRT 22 TO 32 WAIST

3 BIG PRESENTS FREE TO GIRLS


Teddy Grunts Like a Live Bear
Movable Arms and Legs

Big FREE Shaggy, Grunting, Teddy Bear

Teddy Bears are the great popular craze. The girls play with him, carry him to school, and give Teddy Bear parties. Even the grown up ladies carry him around, for he is all the rage everywhere. Some of the more expensive Teddy Bears **sell from $15 to $25 each**, but I am giving a bear away that I have had made specially for me, with which you will be delighted, as it has all the features of the big expensive bears, and any girl would be proud to own it.

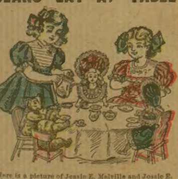
It is a big brown shaggy bear, and I have had him made with special movable arms and legs, so that he can sit up, lie down, stand on all fours and be placed in all sorts of comical positions, just as if he were really alive. He has jet black eyes, and is so real he looks like the little cub bears you see in the parks or at the circus. By just giving him a little squeeze he makes a funny grunt that sets everybody laughing. You can have more fun with Teddy than anything you ever owned. This is the **real Teddy Bear** girls, of which you have heard so much, and I want to give him to you absolutely free. **Surely you would not refuse this Teddy Bear when you can get him for nothing.**

Read my generous offer and send me your name at once. You will be surprised how easy it is to get this bear, and also the handsome doll and tea set that I offer. **I give all three presents** and also pay express charges, so that they do not cost you one cent of your own money. I send you **all three at once**, so just stop and think all that you are going to get from me.

I could not afford to make this generous offer except for the fact that I do it to advertise my mammoth business. I want every girl to know me and say a good word for me, and I have stopped at no expense to get the **very best** Teddy Bear, the **very handsomest** Big Doll, and the **very finest** China Tea Set that I possibly could, for doing this little favor for me that will not cost you one cent of your own money.

Girls, **just imagine** the fun you can have with **all three** of these beautiful presents—**the big doll, the shaggy, grunting Teddy Bear** and the handsome **china tea set**; you and all your friends. Girls everywhere are delighted with these presents. Don't fail to write me, as they cost you absolutely nothing. Just send me your name and address, that's all. Do it today, now, this very moment.

BEARS EAT AT TABLE



Here is a picture of Jessie E. Melville and Jossie E. Melville, daughters of Judge Willis Melville of Brookfield, Ill., two happy children giving a delightful tea party. Read what they say, and this is only one of many letters received from happy children thanking me for the beautiful presents.

"My Dear Mr. Bowen—We want to tell you how delighted and pleased we are with the talking dolls, tea sets and Teddy Bears. They are great. We have doll and bear parties and many good times with these beautiful presents. (Signed) JESSIE E. MELVILLE, JOSSIE E. MELVILLE."

Every girl and young lady should write to Mr. Bowen at once and accept his generous offer of a great big Doll, grunting Teddy Bear and a beautiful china Tea Set free of charge. They do not cost you one cent, now or any other time if you write at once; he will also give you a handsome present as an extra gift.

Talking Doll, Tea Set, Teddy Bear— ALL FREE

Just think girls, I give this **beautiful bisque doll,** which is nearly half a yard tall, has beautiful curly hair, big blue eyes which open and shut, is **magnificently dressed** in satins and laces and a large hat, and has shoes and stockings that can be taken off and put on, so that you can play with this doll just as if it were a real baby.

This wonderful talking doll says papa and mama so plainly and distinctly that it seems to others that you had spoken the words yourself. The big blue eyes, the pretty hair, the peaches and cream complexion cheeks and the little rosebud mouth makes this the handsomest and dearest doll you could imagine. Nothing could give a girl more delight than this doll, and **I want every girl to get one free.**

I also give a 27-piece China Tea Set consisting of 6 cups, 6 saucers, 6 plates, tea pot, sugar bowl, cream pitcher and 6 spoons, so that you can give a doll tea party and invite your friends to bring their dolls, too. It is not every girl who has a set of dishes for her doll, **but I want all my girls to have one,** so I am going to include this handsome set with every doll, which is beautifully decorated and the china clear and handsome, just like the real china in the large sets costing many dollars.

And I am not going to stop here, but I am also going to give a **real genuine Teddy Bear,** one of the big, brown and shaggy kind, with jet black eyes, movable head and arms, that sits up, lies down or stands on all fours, and grunts when you squeeze it, just as described. Some girls prefer the Teddy Bear to a doll, but my girls can have both.

I GIVE ALL 3 PRESENTS FREE!

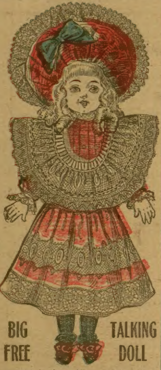
To any little girl (or big girl either) who will show my fine art pictures among her friends and neighbors. **You don't have to sell these pictures,** just go among your friends and neighbors and tell them the grand offer Mr. Bowen has made you and they will all take one or more pictures to help you earn your presents. The pictures are only 25 cents each, and you can easily dispose of 16 in a few hours time. They are 16 x 20 inches, in handsome colors with gold lithograph frames, all ready to hang on the wall in the parlor or sitting room.

I don't charge you anything for the pictures, as I send them free, and you can try and see what you can do, and if you can't sell them they can be returned and no harm done. However, I know any bright girl can earn these presents without any trouble whatever. Just think, you get a big handsome doll, a grunting Teddy Bear and a 27-piece tea set and 6 spoons all for this little work. It is the most generous offer ever made, and every girl reader of this paper should write to me at once and get the pictures. As soon as you have given them all away, I will send you the **Doll, Bear and Tea Set and Spoons absolutely free.** I also pay express charges on them, so they will not cost you a penny. Write to me today, and be the first in your neighborhood to get these beautiful free gifts.

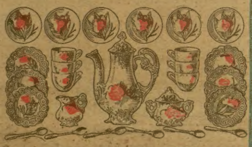
PARENTS should encourge their children in this work. Your girls will think far more of this bear, doll and tea set than if they merely got them as a present from you or some other relative. There is no obligation, whatever, of any kind, remember, as I send the pictures free **without a cent in advance.** I take the pictures back if they can't be disposed of and no harm done. I also pay express on the presents so that **there is not a single cent that you would be out of pocket in having your girls answer this advertisement.** It costs nothing to try, so why not write me today.

EXTRA GIFT FOR MAMMA

You can also give your mamma a beautiful ring as an extra gift if you will write us at once. This is a nine stone ring, three large ruby doublets and six frosted pearls; given extra if you'll write at once. This beautiful ring is extra and in addition to the other three presents.



This big handsome bisque talking doll is the girls delight. It has beautiful curly hair, pretty rosy cheeks, red lips, and is nearly half a yard tall. It says mama and papa, goes to sleep, and when it wakes up, opens its eyes, just as natural as life. Dolly is magnificently dressed in silks and satins, and you can dress and undress her, take off her beautiful hat, shoes and stockings, and play with her just as if she were a real baby. You will be more than delighted with this magnificent present, and it is absolutely free.



BIG FREE CHINA TEA SET

This handsome tea set, small enough for Dolly, consists of 6 cups, 6 saucers, 6 plates, 6 teaspoons, tea pot, sugar bowl and cream pitcher. It is beautifully decorated, just like the large expensive china costing many dollars. I also give six tea spoons, so that you can give a real tea party and invite your friends to bring their dolls also. Tea set and spoons are free.

THIS OFFER MEANS WHAT IT SAYS

And is not an offer of just "your choice" of these presents, remember, but means that **you get all three of them**—the Teddy Bear, Big Doll and China Set, **all at the same time,** for just the little favor mentioned. Show this grand offer to your parents. They will be glad to help you if you do not understand it. **Just write me anyway. It is not even necessary to write a letter** unless you want to. Just your name and address will do. I will know that it is in answer to this advertisement, and will have everything arranged for you to get these free presents, also extra present for mamma if you write at once. Send today and address plainly.

A. H. BOWEN, Manager Dept. 206
48-48 West Monroe Street - - CHICAGO

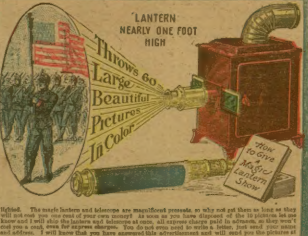
FREE FOR BOYS

I am making the biggest magic lantern offer even made. This magic lantern has been specially made for me, and I do not need to tell you that I have insisted on the best material throughout. **It is complete in every detail,** including a special large reflector, curved Russia Iron chimney, non-explosive lamp, and fine glass chimney. **It has two special strong telescopic lens,** so that the pictures are brought out large and clear and distinct. **I also include 60 pictures, all different in colors.**

Here is an outfit you would be proud to own, as no boy in your town would have anything like it. I also give an instruction book, telling how to get up an entertainment and how to give a lecture about the different pictures should you want to make extra money by giving entertainments. You can give an entertainment lasting an hour to an hour and a half, and charge an admission fee.

The Magic Lantern alone would be a big present for the little service I ask, but in order to show the boys how generous George Harvey is, I am going to give, in addition to this magic lantern, 60 views, instruction book, etc., **THIS HANDSOME SPY GLASS** with which you can have a barrel of fun, as you can see objects far in the distance with it, also look at the moon, stars, etc. This spy glass is a good article, handsomely made, inside tubes polished brass with brass mountings, imitation red leather cover, fitted with good magnifying lenses, entire length 4½ in. It does not cost you one cent, but is given free with the lantern as an extra inducement.

I give both this great Magic Lantern outfit and fine Spy Glass to any boy (or young man) who will show my fine colored art pictures, size 16x20, with handsome lithograph frames all ready to hang on the wall, among their friends and neighbors and get only 10 of them to take a picture at 25 cents each. It is easy work to get rid of the pictures, as everybody can use them, and any bright boy or young man who actually wants a magic lantern and telescope free can do this little favor for me in a few hours time. **IT COSTS NOTHING TO TRY,** as I send the pictures free without a cent in advance, and if you don't succeed there is no harm done. Try it any way. The boys everywhere are delighted.


LANTERN
NEARLY ONE FOOT
HIGH
Throws 60 Large Beautiful Pictures In Color
How to Give a Magic Lantern Show

The magic lantern and telescope are magnificent presents, so why not get them as long as they will not cost you one cent of your own money? As soon as you have disposed of the 10 pictures let me know and I will ship the lantern and telescope at once, all express charge paid in advance, so they won't cost you a cent, even for express charges. You do not even need to write a letter, just send your name and address. I will know that you have answered this advertisement and will send you the pictures at once, all charges paid, immediately on hearing from you. Write today.

GEORGE HARVEY, Pres't, Dept. 106 46-48 W. Monroe St, Chicago.

Mr. and Mrs. Robin.

Mr. Robin is a great nuisance when the nest is undergoing repairs or has to be rebuilt, for he everlastingly bothers the lady robin while she goes about her fine art of nest building. Does he ever assist in the good work? Not he, says a writer in the London Telegraph. He will not soil his pretty bill with anything necessary for the nest. After the little fellows are hatched he becomes a genuine old hen, and will hover about the nest while the lady is away for worms for her young. He may once in a while forget his lordliness and bring a worm for his lady, but as for food for his offspring, the fuzzy little fellows would starve were they to depend upon the father robin for food.

He seldom bothers about the little ones' first flight attempts, and will sit perched handily by while mamma tackles the delightful task. But let danger approach the young or the mate, and lo and behold! Mr. Robin becomes a genuine fighter, and will draw near to the jaws of death boldly and without hesitation.

The girl who throws herself at a man never makes much of a hit.